

LORD ODO RUSSELL



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AMBASSADOR  
TO BISMARCK  
LORD ODO RUSSELL

FIRST BARON AMPHILL

*by*

WINIFRED TAFFS, M.A., Ph.D.

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TO MY FELLOW STUDENTS  
AT THE  
INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## PREFACE

**A**LTHOUGH it is generally admitted that Lord Odo Russell was one of the most successful of British Ambassadors during the nineteenth century, so far no study of his career in Berlin has been published. He himself belonged to that school of diplomacy that sought its reward in work well done behind the scenes rather than in the limelight of publicity, but nevertheless his work belongs to history and his story deserves to be told.

The historian has had to depend mainly upon official correspondence, since private letters have been destroyed, but the voluminous despatches in the Foreign Office Archives, supplemented by the collation of material widely scattered in memoirs, biographies and other sources are amply sufficient to reconstruct a picture, the details and colour of which would be deepened and improved by personal papers, but not, I believe, altered in any material particular. In this impression I am confirmed by the opinion of those of his family with whom I have had the privilege of discussing my work.

My sincerest thanks are due, and gratefully given, to all who have helped, directly and indirectly, in the preparation of this book. Especially would I thank the Archive Staff of the Public Record Office, London, and of the Foreign Office, Berlin, Miss Flora Russell, daughter of Lord Odo Russell's brother, Arthur, for invaluable help, Professor Lillian Penson, and above all, Professor Seton-Watson and Dr. G. P. Gooch, whose interest and inspiring kindness, as so many students can testify, is unbounded. I deeply regret that the death of the second Lord Ampthill, soon after the manuscript of this book was completed, allows me only to pay my tribute of thanks to his memory.

Finally my gratitude is due to those friends whose kindness has made publication possible, and especially to the Senate of the University, for a generous grant in aid from the Publications Fund of the University of London.

WINIFRED TAFFS.

*Hampstead, 1937.*



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

**O**DO WILLIAM LEOPOLD RUSSELL, the first Baron Ampthill, was born on 20 February 1829, at Florence. His father was Major-General Lord George William Russell, second son of the sixth Duke of Bedford, and his mother, Elizabeth Anne, daughter of the Hon. John Theophilus Rawdon, brother to the Marquis of Hastings. He had two elder brothers, Francis and Arthur; the eldest was later to become the ninth Duke of Bedford, and Arthur was for many years Member of Parliament for Tavistock.

His father was a man of strong personality, but his mother added qualities of great originality to a mind equally strong and impressive; the mutual love between her and her sons was unbounded and manifested itself as far as her youngest son was concerned in an education that was entirely unorthodox for that day, but which was calculated to fit him for the career that was to open out before him. Very early the young Odo showed that same remarkable talent for languages which had brought one of his ancestors into favour in the days of Henry VII, and this talent was developed to the full. Instead of spending his early years at a public school he was privately educated and travelled considerably. As a consequence he was able all his life to speak with perfect fluency not only English, French, Italian and German, but was equally at home in many of the dialects of these tongues. A diplomatic career was clearly marked out for a young man whose distinguished birth and linguistic skill only served as a background for the even more essential qualities of high character, courtesy and tact.

At the age of twenty he was appointed as attaché at the Embassy of Vienna under Sir Arthur Magenis. From 1850 till 1852 he was at the Foreign Office under Palmerston and Granville, between 1852 and 1860 he was attaché successively at Vienna, Paris, Constantinople and Washington. His first experience in charge of an embassy was at Constantinople, a responsibility he

owed to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's visits to the Crimea in 1855. He became Secretary of Legation at Florence 23 November 1858.

For the next years he was on special service in Rome, where he displayed brilliant diplomatic qualities. While he was here the Vatican Council was held, and he was chosen to report the diplomatic history of the Council to the Government. With enthusiasm he set to work to read all he could to prepare himself for his task. "You know," he wrote to Manning, "that my earnest wish is to do justice to all parties, and for that I require knowledge."

His personal position was unique. He was not himself a Catholic but his mother was a convert, and from her he learned to adopt an attitude towards Rome which was better informed than that of many of the diplomats of the period. The Pope trusted him and granted Cardinal Manning a dispensation to disclose the secrets of the Council to him so that the British Government had an inside account of its deliberations, and of the Papal point of view.

It was while he was in Rome that he married Lady Emily Theresa Villiers, the third daughter of Lord Clarendon. "... He is not rich in worldly goods," wrote Clarendon to Madame Novikov, "but very rich in all the qualities that will make a woman happy, for he is not only clever, accomplished and well-informed, but he is the most amiable and kind-hearted of men, and of this I am sure as I have known him ever since he was a boy. . . ." Lord Clarendon's confidence was not misplaced; the marriage was ideally happy.

Odo Russell was recalled in 1870 to become Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and within a few months he was sent on a mission to the German Headquarters at Versailles to discuss Russia's attempts to denounce the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. Here he made an excellent impression on Bismarck, who could appreciate the spirit behind Russell's famous threat—"with or without allies"—and the Chancellor was only too ready to welcome him when the British Government decided to appoint him to Berlin. He held the difficult post of British Ambassador with dignity and distinction until his death at the early age of fifty-five at Potsdam on 25 August 1884.

Well deserved honours fell to his lot during his ambassador-

ship. He was called to the Privy Council in 1872, and on his brother's succession to the Dukedom of Bedford he received a patent of precedence as son of a duke. He was made a G.C.B. in 1874, and a G.C.M.G. in 1879. Lord Beaconsfield and the Queen would have conferred a peerage on him after the Congress of Berlin, but deferring to the wish of his brother, he refused it until the offer was renewed by Gladstone. In 1880, on the occasion of the marriage of Prince William of Prussia, Lord Odo Russell became Baron Ampthill of Ampthill in Bedfordshire, but it is as Lord Odo Russell that he will always be famous. He had some thoughts of adopting the motto: "With or without allies," but finally chose *Che Sara Sara*.

Lord Odo Russell had four sons and two daughters, his eldest son succeeding to the title. Lady Ampthill survived him for many years, dying in 1927.

## ABBREVIATIONS

As all documents from the *Documents Diplomatiques* used are taken from the 1re Série this is omitted in the foot-note and for a similar reason 2nd Series is omitted from the foot-note concerning Queen Victoria's *Letters*.

## OTHER ABBREVIATIONS

1. *D.D.F.* *Documents Diplomatiques Français.*
2. *G.P.* *Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinett*
3. *N.D.A.Z.* *Nord Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung.*
4. *Pol.Arch.D.A.A.* *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen*
5. *Q.V.* Buckle: *Letters of Queen Victoria.*

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## BOOK I

### THE NEW EMPIRE

*You have a new world, new influences at work, new and unknown objects and dangers with which to cope, at present involved in that obscurity incident to novelty in such affairs.*

—DISRAELI.



MR. ODO RUSSELL, AS A YOUNG MAN  
AFTER A LITHOGRAPH BY KRIEHÜBER, VIENNA

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS IN BERLIN

[1872]

Appointment—Russell's new colleagues—the first diplomatic problem—France and Germany—illness and leave during his first summer—position in Berlin on his return.

#### I

LORD AUGUSTUS LOFTUS, the last British Ambassador in Berlin, had not pleased Bismarck. He had not regarded the great cause of German unity with any particular enthusiasm, his manner had been rather haughty, and he had not enjoyed much popularity either in diplomatic or court circles.<sup>1</sup> The creation of the empire made his transfer to another post eminently desirable, and the British Government, aided by a suggestion from the new Emperor, set about choosing his successor. Their choice fell on Odo Russell.

The Ambassador elect, who had not yet attained his forty-third year, was young for so important a post, but the appointment was, for many reasons, greeted with approval. Mr. Russell's personal qualities and experience so singled him out as the obvious representative for Berlin that the Diplomatic Corps acquiesced without a murmur at his promotion over the heads of his seniors.<sup>2</sup> Already he had filled a delicate post in Rome with such success that when its abolition was suggested some years later a strong argument in favour of its retention was that it had afforded him an opportunity to show his tact and skill,<sup>3</sup> and he had so impressed Bismarck at Versailles with the courteous firmness with which he had presented the British case against Russia's determination to denounce the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris

<sup>1</sup>Ponsonby: *Letters of the Empress Frederick*. p.129. Q.V. II. 80: 85.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. III. 534.

<sup>3</sup>*Spectator* 6 August 1872.

that he was prepared to welcome this brilliant young diplomat with the unusual gift of languages warmly on his arrival in Berlin. Nor was his appointment less agreeable to the Court. The Emperor was no whit behind Bismarck in his appreciation of Mr. Russell's qualities, and the Crown Princess, who seldom liked those who enjoyed Bismarck's favour, found herself for once on common ground, and she was to find in the new Ambassador a true friend, and in the British Embassy a second home.

Although his appointment actually dated from 16 October 1871, Mr. Russell reached Berlin on 16 February 1872, to be welcomed by a staff with whom henceforth his relations were to be those of mutual trust and loyalty, consisting of the two secretaries, Mr. Plunkett and Mr. Dering, and of three attachés, Mr. Napier, Mr. Henry Loftus and Mr. Bentinck. The military attaché, Major General Walker, was already very popular in Berlin. As for the Embassy itself, it was merely part of a house belonging to Count Arnim, and shared with the Turkish Minister, Aristarchi Bey. Many years were to pass before the British Embassy was to be housed in its own palace.

Two months after his arrival in Berlin, Mr. Russell's eldest brother succeeded to the title of his uncle, the Duke of Bedford, and the Queen granted him the courtesy title of Lord Odo Russell as the brother of a duke, and by the Emperor's express desire he became doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, as representative of the native country of the wife of the heir to the throne. At once he and his wife took a leading part in Berlin society, and in spite of deficient official equipment, the magnificence of their receptions and the great charm of their bearing made the "flat at the corner of the Leipzigerstrasse"<sup>1</sup> one of the most attractive centres of the social and diplomatic world. Here Lord Odo Russell learned to know his colleagues—the pathetic French Ambassador, Count Gontaut-Biron, the aristocratic Count Karolyi from Vienna, the Russian Count Oubril, not yet mistrusted by Bismarck, the Italian Minister, de Launay, the Belgian Nothomb, the Turkish Aristarchi Bey, who once arrived unexpectedly in Lord Odo's quarters, the lift having given way, and the American, Mr. Bancroft, with whose Govern-

<sup>1</sup>Nicolson: *Lord Carnock* p.15 n.

ment his own had been so long at issue over the *Alabama* and the San Juan boundary.

The first months were a test of Lord Odo Russell's patience and tact. By the fact that the German Emperor had accepted the task of arbiter in the tedious and vexatious differences of opinion about the ownership of San Juan, a little island off the coast of British Columbia, this question, so remote from European politics, loomed large in Berlin during Lord Odo Russell's early days in Germany. The boundary had been settled by a treaty of 12 June 1846, but this little island lay in a narrow channel, and both countries laid claim to it. The Treaty of Washington of 8 May 1871 was still open to varying interpretations, hence the request for the good offices of the Emperor, who was assisted by three German experts. Lord Odo's first impression, which was not eventually justified by the award, was that public opinion seemed to be generally favourable to the British interpretation of the Treaty, and that the tone of the Press was satisfactory, "as was to be expected from a sensible people like the Germans."<sup>1</sup>

Claims were handed in by both parties on 14 June, but the negotiations dragged on until in the middle of September, Mr. Bancroft began to show signs of impatience. It was nothing to him that the imperial arbitrator had been immersed in the visits of the Emperors of Russia and Austria, and he called at the Foreign Office twice a week, begging to be informed of the award at the earliest possible moment so that he might at least telegraph it to his Government before it could appear in the papers. The German Foreign Office, not very vulnerable to attacks of this kind, would only commit themselves to a promise that both Governments should be informed simultaneously, and that the Press should not be told at all. Mr. Bancroft now presented copies of the case and counter-case to various journalists and other acquaintances, and was gratified by their assurances that the decision would be in America's favour—"I think not," commented Lord Odo Russell.<sup>2</sup> But three weeks later, the imperial labours still unended, the Ambassador could not hide

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 742. No. 6. The Empress Augusta, who was in England in May thought "a long diplomatic struggle would have a bad effect, as uncertain relations would affect the American money market, which was dependent on London" . . . Pol. Arch. D.A.A. Windsor. To William. 11 May 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 746. No. 227. To Lord Granville. Most Confidential. 21 September 1872.

from himself the fact that persistent rumours were rife in Berlin that the decision would be against Great Britain. It appeared that the German law officers had recommended the American interpretation of the Treaty of 1846 to the Emperor's favourable consideration. He did not know on what grounds, but the American legation seemed to share the general impression.<sup>1</sup>

The military pomp of the meeting of the three Emperors in September 1872, in such sharp contrast to the arbitration policy of Granville, led him to inquire if the question of international law raised by the Treaty of Washington would be discussed by the imperial visitors. Lord Odo thought not, though he believed confidential notes had been exchanged between Bismarck and Andrassy. The question naturally cropped up when the British and American Ambassadors were dining together one evening, and Russell asked his colleague what impression he thought was produced in the three empires "by the great example America and England were giving the peace-loving world." The disillusioned Mr. Bancroft replied that apathy and indifference were universal with regard to arbitration, "although he had no doubt that in the course of years the best books on the subject would be written and published in Germany."<sup>2</sup>

As October wore on and no award was made, the suspense proved too much for the nerves of the American journalists. So long a delay, they concluded, must be due to sinister influence, and they fixed upon Lord Odo Russell as the scape-goat. In a peculiarly ill-informed article the *New York Herald* of 23 October accused the British Ambassador of a mean intrigue. Knowing the unfavourable nature of the judgment, and supported by the Crown Princess, Bleichröder and probably Bismarck, he was attempting to secure a negative result which would mean the failure of the arbitration, if not an absolute reversal of the decision.<sup>3</sup> The very next day the award was published, and it was in America's favour. Naturally disappointed though he was,

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 747. No. 255. 12 October 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 746. No. 249. To Lord Granville. 6 October 1872.

<sup>3</sup>"No doubt Mr. Russell presses his point with vigour and persistency calculated as he hopes to induce the Emperor to refrain from rendering a final judgment. From the experience of the past we even conclude that he resorts to the Geneva tactics and threatens or quibbles on technicalities to refuse to abide by the verdict after going to court. Whether the rumour of the direct interference of the Crown Princess and the indirect intermeddling of Prince Bismarck should be true or false we have no idea that the efforts of the British Ambassador will succeed. . . ."

Lord Odo paid high tribute to the distinction of the jurists and experts who had assisted the Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

Having loosed its poisoned dart the *Herald* now attempted to take cover by casting doubt on its own information, while still insinuating that the immediate publication of the award was not without significance.<sup>2</sup> The *Times* thought the accusation of sufficient importance for editorial comment, but only to dismiss it as "baseless and absurd," whereupon the American paper repeated the general charge that British diplomacy was unscrupulous.<sup>3</sup>

Until he saw this ill-natured attack repeated in the English papers Lord Odo Russell was inclined to treat it with silent contempt, but then he wisely determined to issue a categorical denial to the proper quarter.

*To Lord Granville.* 9 November 1872.<sup>4</sup>—

"... Although it may appear unnecessary to tell Your Lordship that I never was engaged in any intrigue to persuade the Emperor to give an answer different from that which a sense of justice would impel him to do, I think it right to place on record in the Archives of the Foreign Office that I altogether deny the statement, which is utterly false and utterly without foundation. I never interfered directly or indirectly to influence the judgment which His Imperial Majesty might pronounce on the question submitted to his decision. . . ."

Fortunately for the peace of the world, diplomacy demands a greater sense of responsibility than journalism and Lord Odo Russell was soon to be gratified by a graceful act of courtesy on the part of Mr. Jay, the American Ambassador in Vienna. He took advantage of the opportunity of a speech delivered on

<sup>1</sup>To Lord Granville. 25 October 1872. F.O. 244: 258. No. 275.

<sup>2</sup>"The reported intrigues may or may not have existed in the exact form described, but the publication of the decision immediately on these reports gaining currency is not without significance . . . and we can appreciate the anxiety that would lead to small court intrigues. . . ." 24 October 1872.

<sup>3</sup>"With regard to the charge of British intrigues to procure the modification of the judgment of the Emperor, we are not disposed to accept it as baseless or absurd upon the mere assertion of an offended British contemporary. It is generally believed throughout the world that British diplomacy in extreme cases does not stick at trifles and that the ancient maxim that all things are fair in love and war will equally apply to the strategy and tactics of England in the settlement of her international difficulties. . . ." *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 244: 258. No. 300.



Thanksgiving Day to pay a spontaneous tribute to the spirit in which his British colleague in Berlin had acted with Mr. Bancroft,<sup>1</sup> and sent him a copy of the speech.

## II

While the small matter of the San Juan controversy was being decided other important events were taking place in Berlin. One of the first things to become obvious to Lord Odo Russell was that behind the outward impressiveness of Bismarck's supremacy he was haunted by fear of the Vatican and of Socialism, as represented by the International of London, and that these two dangers, the one threatening to undermine the spiritual and the other the temporal power of the state, would lead to a struggle which would be long and painful, and which might even lead to international complications.<sup>2</sup> These formed a sinister background to his ever-present dread of French revenge. In this atmosphere rumours in the German papers in April 1872 that Count Arnim, the German Ambassador in Paris, was returning there from Berlin, bearing a threatening ultimatum, threw both countries into a state of uneasy alarm.

Lord Odo Russell refused to become a scare-monger. He reported that such rumours were inspired by speculators, and denied that any ultimatum existed, but in so far as the rumours were possible because serious grounds of friction were present he did not hesitate to inform Lord Granville that a certain party in Germany already regarded France's rapid recovery with dismayed surprise, and there was a suspicion that she might play with the idea of refusing to pay the rest of the indemnity. In these circumstances Count Arnim might be instructed to ask why so much money was being spent on the army before the indemnity was paid off.<sup>3</sup> He added that the strain was beginning to tell on Bismarck. "... Prince Bismarck's nervousness alarms

<sup>1</sup>"... Not a syllable has been breathed against the integrity of and independence of the arbiters; and when Lord Odo Russell, with chivalric courtesy brought his congratulations to Mr. Bancroft, His Lordship by that graceful act bore testimony to the honour of England and to the integrity of the imperial judge..." Enclosure to despatch. F.O. 244. 258. No. 300. 9 November 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 743. No. 69. To Lord Granville. 30 March 1872.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 743. No. 90. To Lord Granville. 20 April 1872.

his doctors," he wrote, "who insist on long leave of absence and complete rest without further delay. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

The whole of May was occupied with indemnity negotiations, and as one proposal after another fell through, and as the French still continued to make plans for the reorganization of the army, a very bitter feeling against her was manifest in Berlin towards the end of the month. Moltke openly expressed his opinion that the sanity of France could not be relied upon, and Bismarck replied to a friend who congratulated him on a political lull which permitted him to take leave, that "he felt superstitious about political lulls . . . and France was not acting in a manner calculated to inspire confidence in the future."<sup>2</sup> Lord Odo Russell noticed how uncomfortable the position of the French Ambassador at Berlin had become, and heard it said that Count Arnim was in a similarly awkward situation in Paris. He felt himself that danger threatened in the future.

From his retreat in Varzin, Bismarck kept the threads of the negotiations in his own hands, and neither von Thile, his own minister, nor the French Ambassador were admitted into his confidence. While the Chancellor was sending for his financial adviser, Bleichröder and Count Henkel von Donnersmarck from Paris for consultations, Herr von Thile of the F.O. and the Count Gontaut-Biron were asking for leave of absence as their presence did not seem to be required in Berlin.<sup>3</sup>

It was in these circumstances, surrounded with secrecy and mystery, that Thiers and Bismarck at last evolved a financial agreement. With that agreement Lord Odo Russell had nothing to do, but it was with a sigh of relief that he was able to forward it to Lord Granville on 6 July 1872.<sup>4</sup> For some time past he had been ill, and now, much against his will he was forced to ask for sick leave, which Lord Granville was only too ready to grant. He did not return to Berlin until 2 September, when he was almost immediately plunged into the festivities connected with the visits of the Emperors of Austria and Russia to Berlin. He also found that the Kulturkampf had well begun.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 744. No. 8. To Lord Granville. 8 May 1872.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 141. Secret. 24 May 1872.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 745. No. 195. To Lord Granville. Secret. 29 June 1872.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 198. 6 July 1872.

## CHAPTER II

### LORD ODO RUSSELL AND THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF THE NEW EMPIRE

[1872-1878]

*The Kulturkampf, Bismarck's confessed blunder.*

—SPRING-RICE.

*The Kulturkampf.*—Lord Odo Russell's grasp of the Catholic position—contrasted attitude of Bismarck—the beginning of the struggle—Bismarck's change of party—Arnim's visit to Rome—Hohenlohe's appointment—the Pope's refusal to accept it—sympathy of English evangelicals with Bismarck.

*The State versus the Church.*—Return of Bismarck to Berlin—his policy expounded to the British Ambassador—the challenge of the Bishop of Ermeland—manifesto of the bishops—Odo Russell's forebodings—enmity between the Empress and Bismarck—delicate position of the Ambassador—Bismarck's new plans—the May Laws—progress of the strife—Old Catholics' adherence to the state—conflict with the Bishop of Nancy—supplementary legislation introduced.

*Developing Complications.*—Tension between France and Germany—continued interest of English evangelicals—Lord Odo Russell's growing mistrust of Bismarck's church policy—increased persecution of ultramontanes—attempts on Bismarck's life—the Army Bill—Russell's summary of Bismarck's policy in October 1874—effect of struggle in 1875—result of reopening of the Eastern Question on the Kulturkampf—position in 1878.

#### I

AS the representative of the British Government in Rome, Odo Russell had followed the proceedings of the Vatican Council with deep interest and understanding; he was now called upon to witness a very different movement—Bismarck's mighty struggle with the Church of Rome. It was an interesting coincidence. His unique experience, acting on a finely-balanced judgment, enabled Lord Odo Russell to bring to Berlin two rare but valuable attributes—a mind well stored with knowledge, but knowledge unspoiled by prejudice. He himself

was a member of the Church of England, but through his Catholic mother, whom he loved with deep filial devotion, and with whom he was in constant communication, he had long enjoyed opportunities of forming a fair opinion of the Catholic point of view, as it appeared to themselves and not as distorted by their enemies. He counted among his friends many princes of the Church, among whom was the Holy Father himself, and when he had heard that he was to be in Rome for the Council he had spared no pains to make himself master of the whole situation. He read everything bearing on the subject, cultivated the acquaintance of the best-informed Catholics, and was careful to go deeply into every point at issue. His earnestness, fair-mindedness, knowledge and sincerity made such an impression on Cardinal Manning that he applied to the Pope for a dispensation absolving him from the oath of secrecy with regard to what went on within the Council, so that he might disclose its deliberations to him for the confidential information of his Government, and the dispensation was readily granted.<sup>1</sup>

His inside knowledge had given Lord Odo a profound respect and admiration for the hierarchy as an organization, which he considered to be comparable for efficiency to the Prussian army alone, and he was ready to admit that the claim to infallibility, as interpreted by the Catholic theologians and not as it appeared to the uninformed layman, was the corner-stone of the whole fabric. This doctrine he had come to regard as an impartial but not indifferent observer, not as one that he as a member of the English Church must believe, but one to which Catholics might logically be expected to subscribe. He did not judge the Roman Church by a Protestant standard, and held that her decrees, while binding on the faithful, need not cause consternation to those outside the fold. He was now to watch the reaction of the claims of the Church on a mind very different from his own.

To Bismarck, such a detached point of view was in the very nature of things, impossible. He had read much and thought more, but there was a single aim in all his reading and thinking, and because of this, the more he read and thought the more convinced he became that the pretensions of the Vatican were fundamentally inconsistent with the supremacy of the state.

<sup>1</sup>For an account of his activities during the Vatican Council see Purcell: *Life of Manning*, and Butler: *The Vatican Council*.

Man cannot serve two masters. He could not conceive that a faithful child of the Church could also be a loyal son of the Fatherland. The Syllabus and the Vatican Decrees constituted a challenge to German unity. Bismarck did not hesitate to take it up.

By the Prussian constitution the Catholic Church enjoyed a certain well-defined position, accompanied by privileges highly prized and fully exercised. Bismarck held the view that this position was only to be tolerated in so far as it did not conflict with the rights of the state, as he read them, and that the foundation of the Empire had created a new situation in the light of which all previous interests might have to be reviewed. He genuinely wished this empire to be a bulwark of peace and he regarded the Pope's claims as a perpetual element of discord. "There is a party in Rome," he had already written to Prince Hohenlohe in 1869, "which consciously tries to destroy the spiritual and political peace of Europe."<sup>1</sup> That "spiritual and political peace" he believed to be threatened in Prussia, particularly among the Poles, so that he declared later, ". . . 'The Kulturkampf was decided for me preponderantly by its Polish side . . . according to official reports there were whole villages in Posen and West Prussia containing thousands of Germans who through the influence of the Catholic section had been educated according to Polish ideas and were officially described as 'Poles' although in the previous generation they were officially Germans.'"<sup>2</sup> Catholicism was indeed active in keeping alive a passionate feeling of Polish nationality,<sup>3</sup> and the Pope was not making it easier by pursuing a well-thought-out policy of appointing none but Polish bishops in Poland. A battle royal was thus preparing between the Vatican and the Wilhelmstrasse.

With the Roman atmosphere fresh in his mind, Odo Russell entered Berlin to experience a violent change of air. On 22 January 1872, Dr. Falk had been appointed "Kultus Minister," and he was well-fitted for the task Bismarck wished him to undertake—a serious, determined man, with no sentimental objections to striking hard. On 8 February he had just introduced a School-Inspection Bill<sup>4</sup> which, unimportant though it appears, was to

<sup>1</sup>Oncken: *Das Zeitalter des Kaisers Wilhelm I.* II. 378.

<sup>2</sup>Bismarck: *Recollections and Reminiscences*: II. 138.

<sup>3</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.275.

<sup>4</sup>It was a short bill of two clauses only, bringing all types of school under state inspection.

prove a turning point in the career of Bismarck himself, and so Lord Odo Russell's arrival in Berlin coincided with the first important internal crisis in the history of the new empire. In Rome, where he had been scarcely three years before, papal influence had been all-pervading, here in Berlin Bismarck's will was law, and he had decided to demonstrate the fact by taking the opportunity of the debate on this bill to break with the old conservative and Catholic parties and to lead a great national party which should consolidate the work he had already accomplished.<sup>1</sup> The exuberance of national feeling in Berlin in 1872 made the papal position look fantastic, and Odo Russell was the last man to remain blind to his environment. A discussion with Bismarck, who himself told him that he hoped the very party he was now regretfully forced to leave would recognize that he was acting for the good of Germany, made a deep impression on his mind. When Bismarck emphasized that his aim was "first to give all the Roman Catholics all the religious liberties enjoyed by other German subjects compatible with the laws of the empire and secondly to arrest the anti-national political intrigues of a certain portion of the ultramontanes in Poland and elsewhere,"<sup>2</sup> he was unfolding a policy that could not but command respect. The logical implications of that policy were as yet hidden in the future.

At the moment Russell had no doubt that Bismarck had well-matured reasons for making these declarations, which he himself said were the most important he had ever made in his life, and time, he thought, would prove that he was acting for the good of Germany, but even then he was too experienced a diplomat not to see that Bismarck would secure his own personal advantage as well by putting himself at the head of a great national party. If the Emperor, whose health was said to be failing, were to die, the enlightened constitutional tendencies of the Crown Prince would lead him to select popular administrations, and then Bismarck, the most powerful minister, would be indispensable.<sup>3</sup> It was a shrewd reading of the situation, for it

<sup>1</sup>"... So far as I was concerned, the course of our policy was determined not by religious considerations, but purely by the desire to establish as firmly as possible the unity won on the battlefield. . . ." *Recollections and Reminiscences*, II. 136.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 743. No. 34. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 9 March 1872.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 742. No. 12. Confidential. 24 February 1872.

was indeed no forlorn hope that Bismarck had decided to lead, and his popularity was reaching a height never known before. "The joy and enthusiasm of the national party at Prince Bismarck's declaration of war to the Church," observed the Ambassador, "are even greater than the joy and enthusiasm which preceded the wars with Austria and France, and I may add that I am myself surprised at the almost juvenile ardour with which the 'new man' is discussed at Berlin."<sup>1</sup>

There was to all appearance every reason for this joy and enthusiasm. Bismarck had calculated to a nicety all the forces opposed to German aspirations, the Roman Church, the Poles and the French, and now that Church was allying herself with the conservative enemies of the new order it seemed that the hour had struck for her doom to be pronounced. It was soon seen that the struggle was to be a bitter one. The inspired press began openly to discuss such burning questions to the Catholics as civil marriage, endowments and other matters touching the monopolies of the Church. The School-Inspection Bill, which passed as a matter of course, was only the first step in legislation against ecclesiastical privilege. Hints were given that bishops would be prosecuted for libel if they used their own weapons of retaliation, the lesser and greater excommunication. Bismarck's energy and strategy were calling forth a movement that could not but have great and unexpected results. It was even thought that a national German Church might be born of the struggle, "but," recorded Russell regretfully, "I doubt if there is religion enough in Germany to create a new one."<sup>2</sup>

As Bismarck's change of policy occurred just about the same time as a mission of Count Arnim's to Rome, the air was thick with rumours that the mission was political. Russell was told by Bismarck that the object of the visit was only to deliver letters of recall and to attend to private affairs. He did not consider that direct negotiations with the Pope were likely to lead to any good result, nor did he think them at all necessary. Direct legislation could regulate future relations between the clergy and the state without interference from Rome.<sup>3</sup>

This may have been what he wanted the world to believe, but

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 743. No. 48. To Lord Granville. 16 March 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 743. No. 48. To Lord Granville. 16 March 1872.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 34. Confidential. 9 March 1872.

before long the British Ambassador was in possession of a despatch from Sir Robert Morier which threw a very different light on the mission. In a long conversation with Arnim, Sir Robert had suggested that the German Ambassador was charged to offer advantageous terms to the Pope, and that Bismarck's attitude was determined by the fact that he had in his hands the threads of a tangible ultramontane conspiracy. Arnim agreed that he was not far wrong. He had been instructed to offer the Pope the friendship and alliance of Prussia if he would exert his influence to detach the clerical party from coalitions hostile to the empire, so that it would be no longer identified with the Guelphs, Poles and French revengists. Papal refusal meant war to the knife—no compromise was possible. Arnim did not share Bismarck's brooding suspicion of a secret conspiracy. The connection of ultramontaniam with all the elements hostile to the empire was common knowledge, but Bismarck was carried away by passion. The real danger of the situation was Bismarck's position of premier minister of a state with Protestant traditions and chancellor of an empire with Catholic traditions. His own mission, he thought, would not be entirely fruitless; by it the zeal of the ultramontanes would be restrained.<sup>1</sup>

If Arnim's disclosures were accurate, Bismarck's lacked sincerity, but Russell had no immediate opportunity of seeking fuller information; this was the moment when Bismarck, daring beyond any statesman and successful to the utmost point of his daring, was yet unable to control the strain on his own mental and physical health. Restlessness and want of sleep caused by overwork rendered him so nervous and irritable that he had to retire for the time being to Varzin.<sup>2</sup> It was a state of affairs with which Odo Russell was to become all too familiar as time went by.

Morier's despatch had given his colleague much food for thought. If Bismarck were going to conduct a campaign against the Church on the assumption that an international conspiracy against him existed, he foresaw that the consequences would be grave indeed, and it was with genuine relief that he reported the important news on 27 April that Cardinal Hohenlohe was to

<sup>1</sup>Munich. Sir R. Morier to Lord Granville. 6 April 1872. Enclosure to F.O. 244. 259. No. 52.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 743. No. 43. To Lord Granville. 12 March 1872. Newton; *Lord Lyons* II. 31.



be appointed German envoy to the Pope at Bismarck's suggestion. The *Kölnische Zeitung* commented at considerable length upon so unexpected an appointment just when the world was anticipating developments in the hostile relations between Rome and Berlin. It pointed out many reasons for considering the appointment a happy one, and concluded with the remark that it would prove to Roman Catholics the good faith of the German Government in its declaration that it would meet all the just demands of the Catholics. Unfortunately, Lord Odo Russell and the *Kölnische Zeitung* were alone in their optimism. The article met with a cool reception, the appointment which caused so much surprise did not evoke an equal amount of pleasure in Berlin. The nationalists regarded the Church with suspicion, and entirely failed to appreciate the strength of the force against which they were preparing to pit their energies. The Catholics, who might have welcomed the appointment, reserved their opinion pending the Pope's reply. Very few people shared Russell's statesmanlike view that the Cardinal's peculiar qualifications would permit him to carry on negotiations between the Pope and Emperor that might have good results.<sup>1</sup> All these speculations were rendered fruitless, however, by the fact that the Pope declined the proffered olive branch.

When Odo Russell returned to Berlin in September he found Bismarck deeply gratified by an address he had received from Lord Kinnaid and other evangelicals assuring him of admiration and sympathy in his struggle with the ultramontanes, and expressing the pious hope that "the Almighty Ruler of mankind may speedily deliver Europe from the disastrous influence of ultramontanism and that through your instrumentality Germany may take the foremost place in the maintenance of those principles which exalt the only infallible Head of the Church and spread peace and concord among nations."<sup>2</sup>

Fortified by the valuable support of the English evangelicals, whom he publicly thanked in the *National Zeitung*, Bismarck went on.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 744. No. 111. To Lord Granville. 3 May 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 746. No. 212. To Lord Granville. 7 September 1872.

<sup>3</sup>"... Your declaration has all the more value as coming from the land which Europe during the last centuries has learned to reckon as the bulwark of political and religious freedom. Very rightly does the address estimate the difficulty of the contest which has been forced upon us against the will and expectation of the German Government.

## II

The visits of the two Emperors over, Bismarck retired once more to Varzin. The reforms in Church and State which he considered necessary in the interests of unity were not likely to commend themselves to the party on which he had hitherto depended for support, and he preferred to remain in seclusion while events developed. An alliance between the Ultramontanes and the Conservatives in the Upper House in the Landtag had secured a formidable majority in opposition to the Administrative Districts Bill, which had as its object the abolition of certain obsolete feudal and manorial privileges of the Prussian landed gentry. As the School-Inspection Bill had been aimed at the Church, so this measure was intended to strike a blow at Prussian particularism. The Emperor himself was said to attach great importance to it and the creation of about sixty new peers to ensure its passing was hinted at.<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck's absence from the capital excited much comment, but Lord Odo read into it a less sensational explanation than was generally current. The Prussian Upper House had to be neutralized if reforms necessary to the Empire were to be carried into effect, but a parliamentary crisis alone would make this clear to the Emperor, bound as he was by gratitude to the ever-loyal nobility of Prussia, and Bismarck's scheme was carefully staged to bring this about.<sup>2</sup> The "serious illness" which popular imagination had seized upon was, as far as Lord Odo Russell could see, nothing more than a slight indisposition. He was not

The duty of the state, equally to protect the peace of the different religious confessions, and the liberty of conscience of each of its subjects, would be no easy matter, even if it were not aggravated by the Government by an abuse of proper influence and by the artificial agitation of religious minds.

I am delighted to be of one mind with you as to the principle that, in a well-regulated community, every person and every creed must enjoy that measure of freedom which is consistent with the freedom of the rest, and with the security and independence of the land.

In the struggle for this principle God will protect the German also against such adversaries who make his holy name the excuse for hostility to our internal peace; but it will cause special satisfaction to everyone of my countrymen that Germany in this contest has obtained the assent of numerous and important voices, who find expression in your address. . . ." *National Zeitung*. 14 September 1872.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 748. No. 291. To Lord Granville. 2 November 1872.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 303. 11 November 1872.

mistaken—a few days later Bismarck returned to Berlin in cheerful spirits and he called on the Ambassador on two successive days to explain to him his ministerial policy. So startling were his confidences that Russell confessed to a feeling of considerable diffidence in communicating them to his Government. He found it impossible to work with his colleagues, he said, and the Emperor refused to dismiss them, partly through indecision and partly through a desire to play one minister off against another.

His refusal amounted to nothing more or less than a most undeserved lack of confidence. Bismarck roundly abused Count Eulenburg “who was a fool” and General Roon “who was in his dotage” for mismanaging the Districts Administration Bill, so that the Conservative party, ultra-loyal when properly handled, “were running riot and voting with the Ultramontane enemies of the dynasty.” The Empress infuriated him. “Her Majesty had the advantage over him of breakfasting with the Emperor, and of looking over the morning papers with His Majesty, when she found daily opportunities of fighting the battles of the clericals her spiritual and political directors and of undermining the Emperor’s confidence in him, whose services His Majesty had unhappily never appreciated. When the Emperor agreed with her views she was in the habit of saying to him, “You will never have the courage to say that to Bismarck.” After breakfast the Emperor of course met him prepared for resistance, and it became his laborious and wearisome duty to counteract the Empress’s influence by arguments and persuasions which often called forth the old Emperor’s tears, His Majesty not having sufficiently studied or understood the requirements of his new empire to have a practical opinion on the matter.

“Under these circumstances the Prussian Government was like a coach with eight horses harnessed to its wheels. He could no longer consent to be one of them and wear out his strength in matters of administrative detail while the consolidation and peaceful development of the great German fatherland demanded all his energies. He had asked the German Emperor to relieve him of the Prussian premiership, so as to free himself from all petty annoyances; they wasted the time he required to carry out the higher and more important duties of German Chancellor but he reserved his post as foreign secretary because the foreign

interests of the Prussian kingdom were identical with those of the German Empire."

Lord Odo Russell asked why the conflict should cease if Bismarck relinquished the position of head of the Prussian Cabinet but still remained a member of it. Bismarck's reply was a significant hint of his political philosophy. "Practically his colleagues would find it useless to interfere with his foreign department, whilst as member for Prussia of the Imperial German Council of the realm of which he was president they would simply rank with the other German representatives of Bavaria, Saxony, Württemberg, etc., and hold a subordinate position to himself as German Chancellor. As Prussian premier he had to waste his time in battling for the King's sanction to every administrative measure in the kingdom, a duty that would now devolve on General Roon, the future president of the Prussian cabinet, whilst as sole responsible minister for Germany (the Chancellor of the Empire having no colleagues) his, Prince Bismarck's, sanction and signature was indispensable to the German Emperor's decrees . . . thanks to this gradual growth of his power in the State he could devote the rest of his life to the good of Germany and peace of Europe with increasing prospects of success. . . ."

These evidently were the plans which Bismarck had been quietly maturing at Varzin and Lord Odo Russell concluded that he was forcing the Emperor not for the first time to follow an unwelcome and unexpected policy. ". . . Left to himself, King William would not have planned and undertaken the Danish, the Austrian or the French war, none of which he conscientiously approved of. In following the extraordinary phases of Prince Bismarck's progress to power, I cannot but feel reminded of Wallenstein, and ask myself how long the Emperor will submit to his tyranny. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Odo Russell believed that Germany could not long be governed by a conservative Prussian particularist administration and suspected that the reconstructed ministry was doomed to failure and then Bismarck's plans would be ripe. He would be asked to do what he was now begging in vain—form a National Liberal administration.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 748. No. 358. To Lord Granville. Secret. 22 December 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 766. No. 10. To Lord Granville. 4 January 1873.

For the moment, however, the Emperor was busy conferring honours on his new president, von Roon. On New Year's Day he who had bitterly opposed the School-Inspection Bill and was now the minister chosen to carry it out, was created a Field Marshal. Though he intimated that in its final form he now approved of the bill his appointment to end a cabinet crisis was an indication of the complex forces Bismarck had set himself to control in establishing the new Reich. In the meantime actual hostilities had broken out between the Church and State.

The first bishop to come into conflict with the law was the Bishop of Ermeland who pronounced a sentence of excommunication without the consent of the civil authorities. A long correspondence ensued, for here was a direct challenge, and his action forced the Government to take further legislative steps to secure the sovereignty of the State. As Lord Odo had confidently predicted, the Bishop adhered to the principles of his Church and his emoluments were suspended. In this preliminary incident Lord Odo Russell foresaw a tremendous stride towards the separation between Church and State.<sup>1</sup> Wishing to make their position clear and their attitude sympathetically understood the bishops issued a manifesto. The rights of the Crown, they maintained, were not affected by the creation of the new empire and they solemnly warned the Government to turn aside from an abortive attack on the Church and consider instead the dangers of modern science.<sup>2</sup> But such a manifesto merely served to show that the fire was well alight and when the Pope's provocative Christmas allocution added fuel to the flames, the papers publishing it were immediately suppressed, and Bismarck recalled Herr von Stumm from the Vatican.<sup>3</sup>

New bills regulating the relations between Church and State had meanwhile been introduced into the Landtag. Their ultimate passing was not in doubt, but the debates were accompanied by a vigorous chorus of episcopal protest "that no Catholic Christian priest or bishop can acknowledge them without injury to his faith." Memoranda of great length but contributing nothing new were showered down in great profusion.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 747. No. 244. To Lord Granville. 5 October 1872.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 747. No. 277. To Lord Granville. 26 October 1872.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 766. No. 4. *Ibid.* 2 January 1873.

The events of the past few months had shaken Russell's faith in the wisdom of Bismarck's ecclesiastical policy. "I am surprised," he wrote, "to find that Members of Parliament and of the Administration believe that in the end the bishops will accept the laws and I am at a loss to account for so much ignorance of the spirit of the Church of Rome. I need scarcely tell Your Lordship that the bishops will go to prison before they will give in."<sup>1</sup>

Nobody knew better than Lord Odo Russell how deeply Bismarck had misjudged the spirit of Rome, and he felt it his duty to disabuse the Emperor's mind of an illusion that England and Germany might soon be allies against popery, following a parallel policy of repression. "I explained the difference of the standpoint of Church and State in England and Germany to His Majesty," he wrote, "and said that the love of freedom and toleration were so great with us now that we were not likely to imitate the policy so popular with the liberals of Germany at the present moment of placing the clergy of all denominations under military discipline."<sup>2</sup> But the struggle was making his own personal position rather uncomfortable. The Chancellor, still suffering from unstrung nerves, found an irritable relief in lamenting to him that his policy found little sympathy and no support from the Emperor, and in making wild accusations against the Empress of helping the Catholic priests financially through one of her staff, Count Schaffgotsch, and Russell had to listen while she was denounced in such bitter terms that he was too upset to reply. It was difficult to deal with a situation in which the Chancellor attributed the chief obstacle to his policy to the influence of the Empress, while she herself deplored that Bismarck refused to be on speaking terms with her.<sup>3</sup> It was a delicate situation for an ambassador, but Lord Odo Russell did all he could to soften the friction.

Bismarck now began to look ahead. He regarded the conflict with the Church as having been forced upon him by the policy of Pope Pius IX, and began to frame schemes to deal with the situation that must arise when the Pope, now an old man, should die. The ambassadors at Vienna and Paris were in-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 767. No. 66. *Ibid.* 5 February 1873.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 769. No. 160. To Lord Granville. Secret. 20 March 1873.

<sup>3</sup>Q.V. 2nd Series. II. 246-248.

structed to sound the Austrian and French Governments to see if they were inclined to withhold recognition from the Pope elect until the Church legislation should have been carried into effect in Germany.<sup>1</sup> The plan excited very little enthusiasm in Lord Odo Russell's mind, but he reported that Hohenlohe was not averse to it.<sup>2</sup> The British Ambassador held fast by his conviction that the moral forces of Rome were underestimated in Germany, and that there was a failure to understand the immense power of that force if brought into resistance against the State.<sup>3</sup> But Bismarck did not agree with him, and cheerfully looked forward to ten years' legislation to eradicate the cancer of Ultramontanism in Prussia.<sup>4</sup> And so new ecclesiastical laws were introduced, repealing two articles of the Prussian constitution, and the protest of the Roman Catholic bishops only called forth a storm of abuse in the semi-official and liberal press that showed clearly how little the German authorities understood the forces that animated the opposition. "A struggle has been undertaken," wrote Lord Odo Russell, "which will outlive the present statesmen of Germany, and will only cease when freedom and religious toleration have been restored to the new Empire."<sup>5</sup> On 20 May Bismarck signed a decree of the Federal Council declaring that as the religious orders of the Redemptionists, the Lazarists, the Holy Ghost and Sacré Cœur were affiliated to the Jesuits they came under operation of the law of 4 July 1872 and were summoned to dissolve within six months.<sup>6</sup> The *Correspondance Provinciale* replied to the bishops' dignified letter of protest by threatening them with the logical consequences of disobedience to the laws of the state.<sup>7</sup>

In the discussion on the estimates, Deputy Löwe moved that, in view of Herr v. Stumm's recall from Rome, the sums for the envoy and secretary of legation at the Papal Court should be struck out of the estimates for 1874. But Bismarck knew exactly how many steps he wanted to take at a time. He admitted that no envoy could be appointed at that moment, but he wished to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 771. No. 256. Odo Russell to Lord Granville. 14 May 1873. Most Confidential.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 773. No. 10. 12 July 1873. Confidential.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 771. No. 256. *Ibid.* 14 May 1873. Most Confidential.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 771. No. 291. Odo Russell to Lord Granville. 31 May 1873.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.* F.O. 64. 772. No. 293. [or]

<sup>7</sup>F.O. 64. 772. No. 311. 9 June 1873 (Enclosure),

retain the power to reappoint when desirable and concluded by announcing that the Government would not attempt to influence the papal election but would merely confine themselves to seeing whether the election was legally carried out. This declaration was received with satisfaction by the Catholic party, though its tone was too critical for the Government to introduce a measure which they fully intended to bring forward as soon as the time was ripe. This measure was the military budget which was to be the corner-stone of Bismarck's work.<sup>1</sup>

The bishops were not one whit more obedient than before. Conrad Martin, Bishop of Paderborn, was soon in conflict with the secular authority. In accordance with the bishops' protest of 26 May he had refused to hand over to the Governor of Westphalia the statutes of the School of Philosophy and Theology and proceedings were to be taken against him.<sup>2</sup> The Archbishop of Posen was ordaining priests who had not been educated at a university in defiance of the law and Archbishop Melchers of Cologne was equally contumacious. But all the Catholics were not united. On 14 June 1873 the Emperor had been gratified by an address from the moderate Catholics presented to him by the Duke of Ratibor expressing their perfect confidence in him and protesting against the attempt of the Ultramontanes to claim sole representation of the German Catholics.<sup>3</sup>

On 3 July Lord Odo Russell went on leave. While he was away autograph letters had been exchanged between the Emperor and the Pope, but the correspondence had done little either to clear up or develop the situation,<sup>4</sup> and when he returned it was to notice with great regret and alarm that the struggle was raging as fiercely as ever. The Archbishop of Posen had by this time gone so far as to threaten those obeying the new laws with the greater excommunication. The autumn was taken up with trials of the contumacious bishops. The wealthy Polish sympathizers of the Archbishop of Posen were prepared to help him financially, but neither they nor his own able defence sufficed to save him from ruinous fines with an alternative of imprisonment. Archbishop Melchers and Bishop Martin were likewise con-

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.286.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 772. No. 313. To Lord Granville. 11 June 1873.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 772. No. 348. 28 June 1873.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 776. No. 365. To Lord Granville. 22 October 1873.



demned and the latter was threatened with distraint on his private property.<sup>1</sup> That the fines might be really ruinous each separate appointment of a priest was treated as a separate offence.

While doing their best to crush Ultramontane resistance the Government showed every anxiety to cherish the Old Catholics. A yearly subvention was granted to them from a general fund at the disposal of the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and an Old Catholic, Dr. Reinkens, was appointed as Catholic bishop in Baden. His pastoral letter in reply to the Pope's encyclical was almost servile in tone, and must have made pleasant reading to the civil authorities.<sup>2</sup> It certainly convinced Lord Odo Russell that the Old Catholics had become a political weapon which Bismarck would wield against Rome, and he thought it possible even at this stage that they might be organized into a state church if they could only avoid theological controversy among themselves. The very oath of allegiance had been altered for Dr. Reinkens, and it was said that it could be taken by Ultramontanes as well as by Old Catholics. But Lord Odo Russell reiterated that there was as little sign as ever of the understanding of the spirit of Rome that he so much desired to see.<sup>3</sup>

The Conservatives were smarting over the defection of their leader, for Bismarck, in his attack on the Church, was not resting from his efforts to suppress particularism at the same time. He now returned from Varzin and made a vigorous defence against the onslaughts of his former friend v. Gerlach, who taunted him in the Landtag with forsaking Conservative principles. In a speech that was cheered to the echo by the Liberals he said he had become a Liberal because he had "learned to subordinate his personal convictions to the necessities of the state," and he had come to realize that "the attitude of the Catholics was revolutionary and must be dealt with as such."

The same afternoon he called on Lord Odo Russell. Speaking of the debate he said that it was the first time he had stigmatized

<sup>1</sup>*Deutsche Nachrichten*. October-November 1873.

<sup>2</sup>"... What the Pope tells the astonished world of our exalted Emperor, of whom we can never think without giving praise to God, is so opposed to reality, truth and justice, that piety on the one hand and forbearance on the other, impose on us silence. . . ." *Deutsche Nachrichten*. 29 November 1873.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 777. No. 394. To Lord Granville. 15 November 1873.

the attitude of the bishops as "revolutionary" and he had been pleased to find that the Opposition had not even attempted to contradict the assertion.<sup>1</sup>

The evil flood of religious controversy now overflowed the domestic confines of the Empire. In Alsace the Bishop of Nancy was in the difficult position of administering a diocese that was partly in France and partly in Germany. Unfortunately, he was not a man of judicious temper, and he did all in his power to trouble still further the stormy waters, and took this particular moment to issue an anti-German pastoral that threw Bismarck into a nervous frenzy of resentment. He made strong protests to the impotent French Government, and led them to realize that he held Paris responsible for the language of Nancy, while the German officious press occupied itself with proving close connection between Catholicism and the enemies of German unity.

The situation was fraught with every kind of danger. Lord Odo Russell, studying the press, and knowing much of what was inspiring it, could only fear that it was intended to keep up a hostile feeling against France in addition to warning against the Roman Church. In Prussia, all the while, like claps of thunder and flashes of lightning that show the storm is bursting, heavy sentences were being passed on Church dignitaries, who steadily refused to acknowledge the binding force of the Falk laws. The Archbishop of Posen was again tried on 16 December in his absence, together with five priests he had illegally ordained, by the Criminal Court of Gnesen. All were condemned and fined, and personal feeling was running ever higher and higher. Ultramontanes and Old Catholics refused to salute each other in the streets, and the persecuted bishops would have entered the field as Parliamentary candidates but that this mode of carrying on the warfare did not commend itself to the Pope.<sup>2</sup>

As though all this was not sufficient, Lord Odo Russell was alarmed to find at the beginning of the New Year that Dr. Falk was about to introduce supplementary legislation, even to the extent of reviving the ban of the Empire, and that in default of payment of fines the goods of the Archbishop of Posen were being seized, and that he was about to be imprisoned. He was

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 777. No. 431. To Lord Granville. 18 December 1873.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 777. Encl. to No. 448. To Lord Granville. 27 December 1873.

not surprised to find that expressions of sympathy were coming from Bohemian Catholics nor that the German Catholics were prepared to act together with the Poles to elect a Roman Catholic priest to the Landtag, despite the fact that the Pope had declared himself as opposed to this proceeding. Meanwhile the Old Catholics, nourished by the Government, were increasing in prosperity and consolidating their position in the Rhine Provinces and Westphalia.<sup>1</sup>

The elections to the Reichstag now took place.<sup>2</sup> The Ultramontanes increased their representation from 67 to 91,<sup>3</sup> and watched with growing satisfaction the difficulties of the Government. In the Landtag during the discussion on the Civil Marriage Bill the opposition there likewise thought their opportunity had come. A book recently published by a General Marmora related from documentary evidence that Bismarck had discussed the cession of Prussian territory to France in 1866. But Bismarck hotly denied the charge and strongly censured the General for publishing confidential documents.<sup>4</sup> It did not look as though Bismarck's future relations with the Landtag would be happy.

### III

Perhaps because of this the *Nord Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was again employed to draw attention to the relations between France and Germany. It referred to the recent war scare in Paris, dwelt on the gratuitous provocation offered by French society and on the offensive tone adopted by the French press

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 801. No. 21. To Lord Granville. 10 January 1874.

<sup>2</sup>During the excitement of the election the Dean of Westminster and Lady Augusta Stanley visited Berlin. Bismarck told Odo Russell that he was specially and agreeably struck by what was to him the novel combination of a gentleman and a clergyman in one, a combination unknown in Germany, where clergymen were never gentlemen, and gentlemen never clergymen. F.O. 64. 801. No. 30. To Lord Granville. 15 January 1874.

<sup>3</sup>The National Liberal party emerged the strongest. The Progress party had 35 seats, the Liberal party of the Empire had dwindled to 12 members and the German Imperial Party had 28 (including Dr. Falk) the Free and Old Conservatives were completely destroyed as a party, only numbering 15. The Poles mustered 11, the Social Democrats 8 (they had formerly 1). *Ibid.* No. 35. 16 January 1874.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 801. No. 38. To Lord Granville. 20 January 1874.

towards Germany and Bismarck and contrasted it with the calm dignified air adopted by the press of the latter, and with its determination not to be drawn into a needless war with France. The real danger, it said, to the friendly relations between the two countries lay in Rome and the Priests and the bitter enmity of the Roman Catholic clergy towards the present state of things in Germany. The instant France identified herself with Rome she became *de facto* the sworn foe of Germany.<sup>1</sup>

The future looked none too rosy, and Lord Odo Russell found a distinctly uneasy feeling in Berlin that war might again break out. This fear and the reasons for it were expressed very clearly to him by the Duke of Brunswick at a state banquet. He said that he felt convinced that to carry out the national policy Bismarck had espoused, and to maintain himself in power, he would require another war—and so he kept up the idea through the press that France was rapidly becoming once more a menace to Germany, and that every Catholic was an ally of France, and therefore an enemy of the empire. Popery and France in league against the hardly-won unity of Germany was a cause of quarrel that could be taken up whenever it suited his purpose to do so. At the same time the Duke pointed out that the feeling for unity was so strong that his own people were quite ready for annexation.<sup>2</sup>

The new Reichstag was ready to meet and Bismarck was faced with a task on which the success of his life-work might depend. The Army Bill had yet to be passed. From the British Embassy Lord Odo Russell analysed its prospects. An increase in the representation of the Catholic party had been anticipated, but the new organization and strength of the Social Democrats had come as an alarming shock to all though in the immediate future it might be turned to the Government's advantage as it would cause temporary coalitions against the revolutionary party, and so increase the Government's majority. Russell had heard leaders of the so-called Liberal party say that this parliament must be dissolved the moment the Army Bill was passed and the electoral laws must be changed so that the social-democratic element might be excluded in future.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by O.R. 20 January 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 801. No. 39. To Lord Granville (from Brunswick), 21 January 1874.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 801. No. 41. To Lord Granville. 24 January 1874.

Nothing happened between the meeting of the Reichstag and the introduction of the Army Bill to allay national anxiety, although France was showing every desire to conciliate her neighbour. The proceedings against the Archbishop of Posen, which had entered upon their final stage, were also exciting public opinion. By this time his cumulative fines had amounted to the enormous sum of 28,000 Thalers (about £4,200). Part of the money had been paid by the sale of his goods, but as he either could not or would not pay the rest he was shortly to be sent to prison. Throughout the whole proceedings his attitude had been one of uncompromising opposition—he had refused to recognize the competence of the new ecclesiastical court, he had publicly declared that if forced to attend he would refuse to answer questions and he had continued to appoint priests in defiance of the law to the very last.<sup>1</sup> He was the very embodiment of that spirit of Rome which Lord Odo Russell appreciated, but which Bismarck was incapable of comprehending.

In any struggle against the pretensions of the Church of Rome Bismarck could count on the hearty support of a large and influential circle in England. Evidence of this had already been given and now he was to experience it again. The doctrine of infallibility, however interpreted, was so repugnant to the English protestant mind and the struggle against the revival of ritualism had aroused so much prejudice and suspicion against “popery” that Bismarck almost appeared as a crusader fighting a valiant battle against the forces of darkness to the excited imaginations of some of the Anglicans. Among them was Lord Odo Russell’s venerable uncle, Lord John Russell. He arranged a meeting in St. James’s Hall for 27 January to express sympathy with the German Emperor in his struggle with the Pope, and though his great age and poor health would not permit him to be present himself, he wrote a letter to his nephew asking him to tell Bismarck that he thought there should be a Church of Germany as there was of England and that all connection between the State and the Church of Rome should be cut off as she would not pay any real allegiance to a protestant prince. If the popish bishops were not paid they could be as rebellious as they liked.<sup>2</sup> He concluded that he regretted that he saw no possi-

<sup>1</sup>*Deutsche Nachrichten*. 24 January 1874.

<sup>2</sup>Pol. Arch. D.A.A. England. Pembroke Lodge. Earl Russell to O.R. 27 January 1874.

bility of an alliance between England and Germany to keep the peace.

Lord Odo Russell carried this letter in his pocket for days hoping to meet Bismarck, but not happening to see him at last forwarded it under cover. Bismarck was appreciative.

*Bismarck to Lord Odo Russell.* 10 February 1874.—

“ . . . It is difficult at the present moment to speculate on the possible chances of that struggle and delineate any organization that might be the result of it. But there is no doubt in my mind that the dangers of international conflicts would be greatly diminished by the unanimity of the German and English nations and their statesmen in their determination to have the tranquillity of Europe preserved. Germany, having no object for any aggression, will keep the peace; and others would be deterred from breaking it by the mere knowledge of an understanding of which your letter is more than a prognostic. . . . ”

Bismarck took the same opportunity of intimating to Lord Odo Russell that he fully agreed with the idea underlying the words of the “Nestor of European Statesmen” that in clerical government there was always the seed of international conflicts and that a great deal of that evil seed would be thrown out if Germany and England were agreed to stand up for religious liberty.<sup>1</sup> The Emperor also expressed his warm thanks to Earl Russell and an answering meeting of thanks to the one held in St. James’s Hall was held in Berlin on 7 February 1874 and was attended by Moltke and Mommsen.

The May Laws were now to be completed by two further Bills submitted to the Landtag. With the new Army Bill on one hand and the Kulturkampf on the other the Government’s hands were full in the spring of 1874.

The contumacious Ultramontanes were subjected to increasingly harsh proceedings. At first German Catholics only looked on with pity and sorrow at the sad sight of the public auction of the effects of their bishops and archbishops, but they

<sup>1</sup>D.A.A. England. Berlin. Bismarck to O.R. 24 February 1874.

were moved to organize anti-Prussian demonstrations in Bavaria when the Archbishop of Posen was imprisoned in a remote fortress, and in Westphalia riots broke out at the sale of the Bishop of Münster's furniture. Troops had to be sent to protect a protestant carpenter who was helping to remove the goods, Jewish purchasers were molested and further disturbances were anticipated. When the Bishop of Trèves was taken to prison a silent crowd and many priests followed him through the streets. He gave them his blessing and charged them to return quietly and even in silence to their homes.<sup>1</sup> He had been sentenced to a term of two years and three months' imprisonment in default of paying fines of 6,400 Th. only part of which could be raised by the sale of his property.

Anxious though he was for cordial relations between England and Germany, Lord Odo Russell mistrusted Bismarck's church policy ever more and more, while the methods employed to carry it into effect bewildered and horrified him.

*To Lord Derby.* 4 March 1874.<sup>2</sup>—

"... The German Government do not appear to me to be aware of the power of passive resistance of the Roman Catholic clergy. The German bishops who submitted to the decrees of the Vatican Council contrary to their own conviction from a sense of obedience will all let themselves be arrested and imprisoned, but they will never accept the Falk Laws. The Roman Church has always derived strength from persecution but is impotent against the power of freedom and its blessings. . . ."

Bismarck attributed the disobedience to another cause. He thought it was due to the inadequacy of his legal powers and wanted this rectified by an extension of the law. He could already banish Jesuits but he now wished to bring the whole of the Catholic clergy under the law so that all could be dealt with. Russell noticed with what uneasy alarm the Liberals were watching the exorbitant demands of the Chancellor<sup>3</sup> but, as things were, the Bill passed, giving Bismarck the power to secure

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 802. No. 108. To Lord Derby. 4 March 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 802. No. 108.

<sup>3</sup>No. 110. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 5 March 1874.

expulsions in certain districts, and in extreme cases, to banish from the whole empire, with loss of civil rights and nationality.<sup>1</sup> In reporting that the ban of the empire was to be revived Lord Odo Russell had not gone farther than the truth.

Contemplating the proposed legislation he was convinced that it would only strengthen the Catholic party and the papacy in Germany.

*To Lord Derby.* 18 April 1874.<sup>2</sup>—

“... The Pope had made his Church ridiculous by the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception, of the Syllabus and of his own infallibility, but these dogmas were of interest only to the faithful and in no way concerned or stood in the way of those who chose to ignore them. Germany could afford to smile at them in the name of religious liberty and the more so as the German Catholic bishops had led the opposition in the Council of the Vatican. Prince Bismarck's anti-church policy has compelled the German bishops to rally round the Pope and suffer martyrdom for discipline's, obedience's and example's sake and the church that was ridiculous is becoming interesting to the religious and conservative population of Europe. . . .”

All through the summer the finings, seizures and imprisonments went on with their inevitable hardening of the opposition and the arousing of feelings of sullen resentment in those who sympathized with the persecuted Catholics. Absurd and cruel suspicions were created on both sides. Lying rumours were spread abroad, adding fuel to the flames.<sup>3</sup> The more the Government tried to enforce the laws, the more determined became the opposition, and the more Bismarck became convinced that it was inspired by an international conspiracy to undermine the Empire.

These were the circumstances that rendered Kullmann's attempt on the life of Bismarck on 13 July so significant. To Bismarck himself it seemed a signal proof that the international

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 804. No. 194. To Lord Derby. 8 May 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 803. No. 168.

<sup>3</sup>German papers accused Jesuits of murdering v. Balan, who had recently died, and there was an absurd rumour that a lion which had died about this time in the Zoological Gardens, and which had been a great favourite of the Berliners, had been poisoned by the Catholics. F.O. 64. 803. No. 172. To Lord Derby. 22 April 1874.



plot he dreaded was no figment of his imagination and, feeling that he alone could frustrate the conspiracy, his nerves almost gave way under the shock. His escape was greeted with joy mixed with horror that such an attempt could have been made, and a strong desire to connect it with the Ultramontanes was manifested in many quarters. The *Correspondance Provinciale* openly expressed its conviction that the crime would furnish the Government with a pressing occasion to trace more clearly the sources from which the fanaticism of uneducated Catholics continually drew fresh nurture. No opportunity was lost of holding up both the Ultramontane party and the Social Democrats as imbued with a common hatred of the German Empire, and a desire to cause its ruin.<sup>1</sup> As a natural result of this panic the measures of the Government became more repressive than ever. On 4 August the Archbishop of Posen was imprisoned for eighteen weeks.

Meanwhile, what about the Army Bill? It was having a stormy passage through the Reichstag; Liberal members could not forget that they had been led to believe that unity would be followed by a reduction of the military burden they had borne so long and which pressed so heavily on the nation. At last a compromise was reached—a peace establishment was voted of 400,000 men not in perpetuity, but for a period of seven years. This compromise, which caused much comment, was accomplished by Bismarck from a bed of sickness. Later, Lord Odo Russell heard the inner history of this compromise. Bismarck told him that the Bill as originally drawn up to secure this peace establishment of 400,000 men had been drafted without his co-operation by the Emperor and von Roon. Hiding his chagrin he had told the Emperor that he would support the Bill and dissolve Parliament if it failed to pass, but at the same time he told the leaders of the National party that the Bill was not his at all and ordered them to discuss it. The Emperor, receiving the generals on his birthday, gave very strong hints that their aid might be required in a struggle with Parliament. The National leaders were shocked. They wanted advice—and Bismarck was ill in bed. He received them and listened to their dilemma. The Emperor was threatening to dissolve Parliament by force if they

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 805. No. 65. Mr. Adams to Lord Derby. 18 July 1874.

would not consent to inflict an iniquitously high peace establishment on the country for ever.

Bismarck proposed his famous compromise. He promised to save them from dissolution if they could make up their minds to vote for the Emperor's Bill as it stood, but only for the old Emperor's lifetime—say seven years—a septennate, and in return he would do his utmost to induce the Emperor to yield on the question of perpetuity. The leaders, who had not dared to expect such easy conditions, joyfully agreed and proclaimed a triumph to their party.

Bismarck had now to represent the case as a triumph to his master. He explained to him, still from his sick bed, that "thanks to his personal influence in parliament he had managed to save the principle of the bill and to secure the Emperor's glorious army during His Majesty's lifetime against mean reductions at home or scandal abroad—more he could not do, and if this signal service to the Crown did not meet with his sovereign's approval he begged to resign and make room for others." The Emperor on reflection acknowledged his obligation to his Chancellor's skill, whilst Prince Bismarck secured the double advantage to himself of increasing the confidence of the National party in his power to coerce the Crown and of making the future sovereign of Germany dependent for the continuance of the Prussian military system on which the strength of the House of Hohenzollern was based on the votes of the National party of which he was the all-powerful leader.<sup>1</sup>

Clever though this method of cutting the Gordian Knot might be, and typically Bismarckian as we now recognize it, there was much in it to cause apprehension to an observer to whom such methods were foreign, and this was not the only matter which caused Lord Odo Russell to wonder what the future would bring forth to a Germany swayed by a Bismarck. When he returned from leave in October he wrote despairingly, "... Religious persecution is doing its work and ... the Catholics are uniting to defend their Church against State interference with all the energy and devotion of faith. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Since he had first learned to know Bismarck in 1870 he had learned much

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 236. To Lord Derby. Secret. 16 October 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 242. To Lord Derby. 20 October 1874.

about his methods. He had had many peeps behind the scenes and an interesting situation had gradually unfolded itself before his wondering eyes. In the autumn of 1874 he felt convinced that the great Chancellor's position was only maintained by deep strategy and cunning. He fully appreciated the nobility of his designs but could not follow him in the unscrupulousness of his methods. The only explanation that occurred to him was this. As absolute power and security of tenure were necessary to his success, Bismarck had no scruples in using any means to attain them. He must have had many amazing experiences before committing himself to this opinion. He had heard time and again from Bismarck that not the least difficulty he had to face was the indecision and love of procrastination of the Emperor in his struggle with the aristocracy and the church and by the end of 1874 Russell thought he could discern the methods which Bismarck had used to overcome this opposition. He had prepared the way by making himself leader of the National Liberals and by associating himself with the military party.

Grateful though he knew the Emperor to be personally, he knew he was surrounded by influences antagonistic to himself. The Empress and the Imperial family might at any time secure his dismissal. From the moment of his becoming the leader of the National Liberals the aristocracy had little cause to support a statesman who had abandoned them for a "revolutionary party" and the church was the most formidable foe of all. But Bismarck was ready. He now began the strange manœuvres which Russell watched with such amazement, and which culminated in his "compromise" on the Army Bill. The Emperor's suspicions were aroused against the most unlikely persons, mysterious hints appeared in the papers that the Empress was secretly supporting the Church against the State and that the Crown Prince was impatiently awaiting the succession.

The machinery of the old government had to be changed to fit the needs of the new empire and as these changes had been made one by one Lord Odo Russell observed that they all tended to enhance the power and establish the indispensability of Bismarck. He submitted for the Emperor's proposal of a German House of Peers a *Bundesrat* of his own creation, "which he composed of representatives of minor German states selected

from the National Liberal party more or less subservient to his will and trained them to obey him implicitly."

The feudal rights of the aristocracy were swept away. The protests of the Prussian peers smothered under the complacent approval of twenty-five new peers created for the purpose died away into ineffectual silence when the President of the Herrenhouse was informed that "the house would be packed whenever a majority was wanted." The only thing to do was to submit, but the old conservatives, "powerless and heartbroken, abandoned Berlin to return to their castles vowing to sacrifice the blood of their sons no more for the House of Hohenzollern." The Church he hoped to paralyse by the Falk Laws. His encouragement of the Old Catholics was calculated to create discord which he would know how to use if necessary. He made the Emperor responsible for his policy by persuading him to sign the letters he had himself written to the Pope and Earl Russell, although they did not represent his real sympathies.

Bismarck did not admit that he was creating enemies—the enemies were there and he was only fulfilling his mission in destroying them, but that they might not crush him he must have strong support. This he secured partly by lavish expenditure on the press. It was dinned into the ears of the National Liberals, already prepared to give extravagant power to their hero, that without their "unconditional support of his policy the unity, freedom and progress of Germany would be destroyed by the hostile influences of the royal family, the aristocracy and the clergy on the Emperor's mind." Aristocrats were pensioned off under one pretext or another and replaced by creatures of his own. Lord Odo Russell noticed with regret that spies were employed "at court, in parliament and in all classes of society. But," he added, "I refrain from details I am not at liberty to enter into. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

This summary was written at a time of great tension, and Lord Odo Russell was not alone in thinking that Bismarck meant firmly and irrevocably to rivet his power on Germany. A stormy scene shortly after this took place in the Reichstag. A Bavarian deputy named Jung led the attack. He loudly accused Bismarck of following a personal policy calculated to involve the empire in war. The debate that followed was bitter and carried on with-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 236. To Lord Derby. 16 October 1874.

out any of the sense of humour that so often saves the situation in the parliament of another land. Bismarck refused to stand in the dock and placed the Vatican there instead as the potential disturber of European peace. A reference to Kullmann led him to declare that he identified the assassin with the whole Ultramontane party and when Windthorst criticized the suspension of the post of German minister to the Pope he indicted the whole Catholic position. He raked up a remark of the Papal Nuncio in 1869 "that the Church of Rome was only free in America, England and Belgium but in all other countries had to look to the revolution for freedom" and blamed the Roman clergy for the recent war. "... it was the work of the Roman clergy ... the Emperor had resisted to the utmost in the interests of peace but had been finally over-ruled by clerical influences contrary to his better convictions. . . ."

Lord Odo Russell thought that declarations like this were made to strengthen the growing belief of the Nationals that the great enemy was Rome and to lead them to support a policy that should abolish its power in Germany for ever. "Prince Bismarck has no doubt good reason," concluded Lord Odo, "for nourishing these feelings of hatred and hostility to the Roman Catholics in Germany, and will turn them to good account whenever wanted in support of his policy. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

For nearly three years the Kulturkampf had been raging, but the end was not yet in sight. The following year it was to play its part in the international complications that were to ensue, but with pricking of the war scare bubble it ceased to be of international importance, and as the Eastern question loomed ever larger and larger as a possible disturber of European peace, and as social democracy increased within the empire, these two dangers, together with ever-growing economic difficulties, dwarfed the potential menace of Ultramontanism in Bismarck's extraordinarily agile mind. But throughout 1875 and 1876 the struggle showed no signs of abating. By 1877 all the bishops but four were dead or in exile. Fines of millions of marks had been imposed and evaded by flight. Leading dignitaries of the Church had spent months in prison and the monasteries had been dissolved. Even the leader of the Catholic party could see no way out from a conflict that was degenerating into mere barbarity

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 807. No. 326. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 7 December 1874.

than an open and entire separation of Church and State.<sup>1</sup> He carried with him a loyal and compact party which owed its very existence to the struggle. Bismarck had set out to crush a Church—he had only succeeded in creating a party.

<sup>1</sup>Schulte: *Die Kulturkampf*, p.462

## THE FALL OF COUNT ARNIM

[1873-4]

*Opposition to him, to his person, is in his eyes a public crime of the widest significance.*

—ARNIM ON BISMARCK.

*Bismarck's fear of Arnim*—the Ambassador watched—transfer of Arnim to Constantinople—Arnim's press attack on Bismarck—his own story to Lord Odo Russell.

*Arnim's Arrest*—harsh treatment—concern of the British Ambassador—the case for the Government—bad effect on public opinion of the publication of Arnim's despatches—Arnim allowed bail—Bismarck's own version given to Lord Odo Russell.

*The Trial of Count Arnim*—condemnation—Lord Odo's opinion of the tragedy—subsequent history of Count Arnim.

## I

**B**ISMARCK'S struggle with the Ultramontanes and breach with the Conservatives involved, among deeper issues, the shipwreck of a great career. In a conflict with which his master himself had little sympathy, it was not surprising that Bismarck should be particularly sensitive to the disloyalty of any colleague who did not in his own words "wheel at the call of command." Nervous and perplexed, his mind was always terrified by thoughts that the Emperor might abandon him and put a more pliant successor in his place. The obvious candidate would be the German Ambassador in Paris, Count Arnim. He was rich, very highly connected, and professed conservative principles that were above suspicion. Moreover, he was showing a far more independent attitude than Bismarck at all approved in an ambassador. To be prepared for all eventualities, Bismarck

decided to appoint two attachés, von Holstein<sup>1</sup> and von Lindau<sup>2</sup> to keep watch on Arnim's activities.

Bismarck's worst forebodings were realized. From Holstein he learned that the Conservatives were indeed pinning their faith on Arnim, and other revelations followed. He heard that the Ambassador and Decazes were conspiring together in Stock Exchange transactions, and he received dark hints that Arnim was undermining his position by secret correspondence with the Emperor, already none too favourably disposed towards his French and Church policy.

This was the mysterious background to the open friction between the Wilhelmstrasse and the Paris Embassy with regard to French internal politics. For a long time Lord Odo Russell had expected that Bismarck would endeavour to crush his rival, and his transfer to Constantinople was regarded by Russell and in diplomatic circles generally as a sign of the Chancellor's displeasure, and in no sense as promotion. Before the time came for him to take up his new appointment Arnim entered upon an open newspaper warfare with Bismarck and the scandal was patent for all the world to see.

Arnim published a memorandum to convey the impression that Bismarck had ignored his warnings of failing to support the opposition bishops in Rome against the Vatican. Bismarck unearthed despatches to prove the opposite.<sup>3</sup> Arnim made a public apology to Dr. Döllinger, for sentiments expressed in 1869 and which, now exposed by Bismarck, did not correspond with his present views. He concluded with a statement proving himself entirely out of sympathy with the church policy of the Government.<sup>4</sup> So Arnim showed that he regarded Bismarck as

<sup>1</sup>Arnim's accusation that Holstein corresponded with Bismarck about him behind his back and that he manipulated the press against him (*Pro Nihilo* p.13) is supported by Schweinitz, (II. 443) Eulenberg and Harden. Lord Odo Russell seems to have known nothing about this, though he knew that Lindau had been sent to spy upon Arnim as early as January 1873. (Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 45-6).

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Adams, O.R.'s first secretary, knew a good deal about this gentleman and his brother. "He was to correspond direct with Prince Bismarck" and it was commonly reported that he had some 50,000 Th. (£7,500) from the 'Reptilian fund' to spend on the French press. F.O. 64. 806. No. 125. Secret mem. 2 September 1874.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 803. No. 171. To Lord Derby. 22 April 1874.

<sup>4</sup>"Above all I regret that the conference proposed by Prince Hohenlohe did not lead to active measures. If the rankling weeds growing out of the Council had been eradicated at their first appearance, we should not now be in the midst



his enemy and threw down the gage of battle. It was immediately taken up. Explanations were demanded and the Constantinople appointment cancelled.<sup>1</sup> Arnim retorted with another letter to the *Spenerische Zeitung* complaining bitterly of the publication of his confidential report of 14 May 1869 and proceeded to Berlin to lay his case before the Emperor.

So far Lord Odo Russell, shocked and surprised, had not made much comment on the affair but Arnim himself now had a conversation with him that showed how far he was from accepting the logical consequences of the situation. As he did not consider he had been fairly treated by Bismarck he was resolved not to yield to the pressure put upon him by the official and officious press at the Chancellor's instigation but to hold to his post until he was dismissed. But he did not seem to know what Lord Odo Russell knew—that the Emperor had already ordered his appointment to be cancelled. Lord Odo Russell thought that he might merely be put *en disponibilité* for the time being; in this supposition he proved to be correct and Arnim was again called upon to explain his conduct,<sup>2</sup> but his explanations were not satisfactory and all through the summer there was an uneasy feeling that matters could not remain as they were. A strong impression prevailed in the British Embassy that Arnim had been spied upon in Paris.<sup>3</sup> On 5 October the world was startled by the news of Arnim's arrest.

## II

Mr. Adams learned confidentially that his arrest was unconnected with his dispute with Bismarck but that despatches were missing from the Paris Embassy. Arnim had refused to give them up, claiming them as private property.<sup>4</sup> At first he was confined in a common cell, deprived of his servants and all visitors except members of his family and his doctor. Even these

of an inexplicable confusion which calls in question almost everything that for a long time past had become the common property of Christianity. . . ." *Allgemeine Zeitung*. 21 April 1874.

<sup>1</sup>No. 186. To Lord Derby. 30 April 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 804. No. 192. To Lord Derby. 5 May 1874.

<sup>3</sup>Secret mem. 2 September 1874. (Unsigned). See p. 58.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 186. Mr. Adams to Lord Derby. 6 October 1874.

visitors could only see him in the presence of an official. His only privileges were the use of books and the right to provide his own food.

So matters stood when Lord Odo Russell returned from leave. Arnim had been his colleague in Rome, he had both business and friendly relations with him, and he deeply regretted the whole scandal. He knew how bitterly Bismarck had regarded him two years ago and could not understand Arnim's "inexcusable obstinacy in a simple question of discipline which he must have known was contrary to Prussian law." He was still more mystified when Arnim's own son told him that he had himself drawn his father's attention to paragraphs 348 and 349 of the penal code, but was powerless to induce him to give way. Why Count Arnim would not content himself with copies he could not explain. As both parties denied that they contained any political secrets the severity of the Foreign Office was as much a mystery as the obstinacy of Arnim.<sup>1</sup> Judging from dates Lord Odo Russell thought the letters were written at the time when Bismarck was uttering threats against France because he remembered hearing at the time that Arnim followed a more pacific policy than Bismarck.

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 17 October 1874.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Considering the hostility which was known to exist of late between the Chancellor and the Ambassador, I fancied at first that Prince Bismarck's friends and adherents would regret a false move on his part but instead of that I find that he has added immensely to his great popularity in the National party by having what they call sufficient 'moral courage' to allow the law to take its course in the case of an aristocrat, a 'Junker,' and old Conservative of high birth connected with the first families in Prussia and who has represented the Empire at Paris, etc. etc. . ."

The subject was not mentioned for some time between Lord Odo Russell and Bülow as the former thought it more discreet "not to take the initiative but to wait till he volunteered to broach

<sup>1</sup>Arnim's defence was that he did not wish his successor, Hohenlohe, to see the scathing terms in which he was addressed by Bismarck. He always maintained that the despatches were private. Holstein, on the other hand, accused him of withdrawing them to injure Bismarck. The documents which were read at the trial created a sensation in favour of Bismarck.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 238.

the subject himself in conversation,"<sup>1</sup> and at last Bülow gave him his version of the case.

The whole point was that Arnim had not carried out Bismarck's policy in Paris and that on leaving the Embassy he had carried away most secret and important despatches, many of which he contumaciously refused to return, even though Bismarck in his leniency had given him ample time to make copies and had expressed the utmost grief and astonishment at his attitude. It was only after the fullest possible warning that the public prosecutor had been called in and the Count placed under arrest. It was most unjust to accuse Bismarck of being in any way behind the prosecution, but the Emperor found it impossible to forgive such disloyal and disobedient behaviour. The documents Arnim had taken were most secret and related to Germany's policy with France and other countries and to the religious question. The most charitable explanation Bülow could offer was that Arnim must be suffering from the possible existence "of a hereditary tendency to temporary aberration of the mind."<sup>2</sup>

In Berlin the fallen Ambassador found no champion. He played his cards badly, and when the Paris correspondent of the *New York Herald* published the Arnim-Bülow correspondence relating to the despatches, Lord Odo observed sorrowfully that they did Count Arnim "more harm than good."<sup>3</sup> He had always been regarded as a somewhat unsympathetic figure, and therefore there was not much personal feeling for him in his misfortunes.

Arnim was now allowed bail (fixed in the enormous sum of 100,000 Th. or £15,000) ostensibly on ground of health, and was staying in his mother-in-law's house on the Pariser Platz, but as he was seen daily riding in the Tiergarten, Lord Odo suspected that he was not so ill as rumour had it. Meanwhile the unhappy scandal was causing Arnim's unfortunate family the most poignant anxiety. Lord Odo Russell kept in touch with Count Henning Arnim, who confided to him that he was very

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 243. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 20 October 1874.

<sup>3</sup>The same enterprising gentleman who also wrote for the *Daily News*, *Pall Mall* and the *World* was commissioned to buy up without reserve price the missing despatches. Naturally he met with no success. F.O. 64. 807. No. 262. To Lord Derby. Secret. 1 November 1874.

worried because the police had confiscated the draft of a letter to the Emperor in which Bismarck's policy<sup>1</sup> was severely criticized. He was afraid that this letter and others not intended for the Chancellor would fall into his hands and would cause increased sufferings to his father.<sup>2</sup>

He had, indeed, full cause for uneasiness. In various ways it was being brought home to the family that Count Arnim's behaviour was bitterly resented in the highest quarters. His son was suddenly informed that he had no legal right to his title and must drop it forthwith, an ultimatum which was on the face of it vindictive and pedantic in the extreme.<sup>3</sup>

While his kindly nature made him always a sympathetic friend to those in trouble, Lord Odo Russell was secretly surprised and mystified at the whole affair. The attitude of Bismarck's friends was difficult to understand—they seemed so anxious to represent him as being distressed at the severity of the proceedings being taken against Arnim—that in his perplexity he determined to seek an interview with Bismarck himself. This interview disposed once for all of the rumour that Bismarck was not the inspirer of the action against Arnim.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 1 November 1874.<sup>4</sup>—

"... I told the Prince how sorry I felt for my old friend and former colleague. Prince Bismarck replied that Count Arnim, as a man of great social talents, was doubtless a pleasant colleague, but if I could hear the reports of his subordinates I would learn that he was the worst of chiefs, without political tact or honesty, and if I had known him as he did I would agree that he was 'ripe for the rope' and ought to have been hanged long ago. On my expressing great surprise the Chancellor continued to explain that Count Arnim was a man who would poison his own father or steal a silver spoon without compunction, as he had told the Emperor last year, but His Majesty had refused to believe it and had continued to support Arnim against himself, Bismarck. Happily the Emperor's eyes were opened at last and he felt the injustice he had done to his Chancellor, and had allowed the law to deal with Arnim as he deserved, or rather not as he deserved, because he would not be hanged, only imprisoned.

<sup>1</sup>'Police' in document, but I suggest this is a slip.

<sup>2</sup>To Lord Derby. Secret. 1 November 1874. No. 262.

<sup>3</sup>*Deutsche Nachrichten.* 5 December 1874.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 807. No. 262.

Seeing that Prince Bismarck was speaking with calm conviction and without apparent excitement I begged he would be more explicit and tell me what I could really believe about this distressing case.

Prince Bismarck replied that he hoped he would not be compelled to make known the whole truth to the public, but he would now tell me enough to show that he had not done Arnim an injustice.

Arnim, he said, not only made use of his position to make an enormous fortune by speculating in the funds, but he actually falsified and altered the text and sense of his instructions to influence the fluctuations of the Bourse in his favour, and what was more, he enlisted the Duc Decazes as partner in these infamous transactions, and shared the profits with him.

Prince Bismarck ended this painful conversation by deploring the absence of honesty in French statesmen generally, but he excepted M. Thiers, for whom he had always entertained an affectionate regard."

There was a ring of sincerity in Bismarck's indignation, and Lord Odo Russell, who had long known that Bismarck suspected Arnim of exploiting his official position to enrich himself, saw no reason to doubt the accuracy of the information, and passed it on, sadly enough, but in all good faith. But his letters prove that Bismarck was far from the truth later when he asserted that Lord Odo Russell had the lowest opinion of Arnim "as the result of his Roman experiences."<sup>1</sup> Further Holstein was Bismarck's chief informant, and judging from his later intrigues, he cannot be accepted as an entirely trustworthy witness.<sup>2</sup>

Arnim himself, hearing that rumours of jobbery were being circulated,<sup>3</sup> rushed into print with an indignant denial,<sup>4</sup> and was almost immediately rearrested, despite the protests of his doctors. It was said that he was being too much interviewed.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bismarck: *R. and R.* II. 181.

<sup>2</sup>See Eulenberg: *The Kaiser's Friend*. Schweinitz. II. 443.

<sup>3</sup>These rumours seem to have gained credence in France.

<sup>4</sup>*Deutsche Nachrichten*. 6 November 1874.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* 13 November 1874.

## III

The trial, which began on 9 December, was the sensation of Europe. Arnim himself, apparently full of confidence, asked for twelve seats for his friends, claiming that as host he had the right to invite more people.<sup>1</sup> Lord Odo Russell commented fully on the proceedings. He remarked that public opinion had been unfavourable to Count Arnim from the beginning, for though he was considered an able diplomatist, he had never been popular in Berlin. His career had been rapid and brilliant, but had in no way increased the limited number of friends he possessed. The harsh treatment he had received had caused a reaction in his favour, but did not impress the bulk of the people, who mistook it for equality before the law.

The insinuations of the press were responsible for the air of artificial and unhealthy excitement in which the trial began. Wild speculations were afloat that the proceedings would disclose unexpected secrets and that Arnim would be found guilty of high treason, but as the opening days brought no such sensational discoveries to light, the feverish excitement gave way to surprise and disappointment. Arnim was merely indicted for the suppression and illegal appropriation of official documents, and the baffled scandal-mongers hinted that the Government must be reserving a surprise for the end of the trial.

But when the official correspondence was produced there was an even greater reaction in Bismarck's favour.<sup>2</sup>

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 19 December 1874.—

"... Prince Bismarck's despatches were reproduced and discussed with genuine enthusiasm, both for their contents, and for the purity and clearness of style, which is a new feature in German diplomatic documents. Prince Bismarck was held up not only as the most eminent of German statesmen but also as the reformer of the German language and his popularity was greater than ever. Count Arnim's despatches on the other hand, were treated with contempt and the reputation he had acquired by his brilliant career for diplomatic ability was declared to be un-

<sup>1</sup>*Deutsche Nachrichten.* 5 December 1874.

<sup>2</sup>The documents read during the course of the trial are published in the reports.

deserved, his reports to be below average, and his conduct to be unworthy of a government official and of a German subject. The whole interest felt by the public in the Armin trial has to all appearance been merged in Prince Bismarck's despatches and policy, which are eagerly and enthusiastically discussed while every other detail of the trial appears insignificant and forgotten. . . ."

The proceedings closed on the 15th, and on the 19th judgment was pronounced. Arnim, acquitted of embezzlement, but convicted of undue delay in returning the despatches, was condemned to three months' imprisonment.

Closely as he had followed the affair, Lord Odo Russell found two important problems still unsolved—"Why did Count Arnim not resign on finding that he had lost the confidence of his chief?" and, "Why did Bismarck instead of simply dismissing him from the service, still offer him the Embassy at Constantinople after all that had passed between them?"

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 19 December 1874.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Those who know Count Arnim best are of opinion that he expected his position before the country would be stronger if in preference to resigning his post he allowed himself to be recalled. His ambition appears to have led him to believe that he was called upon to succeed to the Chancellorship of Germany. On the other hand Prince Bismarck repeatedly urged the Emperor to recall and dismiss Count Arnim, but His Majesty, who was personally well-disposed towards him, could not be persuaded to take so strong a measure, although he was not unwilling to transfer Count Arnim to some other post if a vacancy happened to occur. Prince Bismarck then created an Embassy at Constantinople and the Emperor consented to Count Arnim's being transferred from Paris to the new post.

His Majesty's feelings underwent a change only when he found his favourite guilty of a breach of discipline by refusing to give up the state documents he had taken out of the archives of the Paris Embassy. The Emperor could not forgive a breach of discipline and the law took its course."

Bismarck had won the game. Arnim's career was ruined; his reputation tarnished in the eyes of his contemporaries. He

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 807. No. 341.

was not tried for perfidious speculation nor for plotting to climb into Bismarck's place, but nevertheless these accusations, skilfully circulated by Bismarck, who was all the time assuming surprise and grief, did as much as anything to poison court and diplomatic society against him.

Unfortunately for him, his next step was unwise. He appealed against his sentence, which was increased as a result. In 1875 a pamphlet appeared, written anonymously but universally attributed to him, entitled *Pro Nihilo*, which, purporting to be a defence of himself, was in reality a bitter attack on Bismarck. Henceforth he was doomed. His offences were stigmatized as high treason, and after a trial held in his absence, for he had fled abroad, he was condemned to five years' penal servitude. These five years were all he had to live. He passed them, not in prison but in exile, passionately believing that the time would come when he would be vindicated. On 19 May 1881 he died.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This sketch makes no pretence to assess the vexed question of the measure of Arnim's guilt. Such a study, however, is called for in view of the fuller knowledge we now have of the part played by Holstein.



# LORD ODO RUSSELL AND THE NEW INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS OF GERMANY

[1872-1875]

*Bismarck also related how, in the year 1852, he had said in Vienna that in ten years from that date he would like to be Minister, remain Minister for ten years, and rest for ten years afterwards to think over his experiences. This had really happened, for in 1862 he became Minister, and next year would be the time when he might give up.*

—HOHENLOHE. 4 November 1871.

*The Meeting of the Three Emperors—Preliminaries—public curiosity and rumours—magnificence of the meeting—conversations of Andrassy, Gorchakov and Bismarck with Lord Odo Russell—his views on the significance of the meeting—the final ceremony—anxiety of the French Ambassador—Anglo-German press hostility after the meeting.*

*The Spanish throne—the Spanish chaos—Thiers's dawning hope of fishing in troubled waters—Lord Odo and the confused situation—Bismarck afraid that France might enlist Russian support—his visit to St. Petersburg—increasing disorder in Spain—Serrano's government proclaimed—recognition by Germany—Bismarck's subsequent reluctance to discuss Spanish affairs—proclamation of Alphonso XII—eventual recognition by Germany—Golden Fleece bestowed on Bismarck by Alphonso—Bismarck's pleasure—his subsequent attitude to Spanish affairs.*

*Franco-German relations—indemnity negotiations—Bismarck and the future government of France—his views on preventive war—Lord Odo's belief that war was not imminent—French attempts to interest Russia in their fate—Great Britain also approached—the government's action—Bülow's explanation—visit of Gontaut-Biron to St. Petersburg—charge and counter-charge of France and Germany with regard to annexation of Holland and Belgium—Russell's entire scepticism of the rumours—press hostility between France and Germany—the Emperor's provocative speech at the opening of the Reichstag—Lord Odo's comments—Gorchakov's intimation that Russia would insist on European peace—agitation in Berlin—further rumours—relations strained to breaking point at close of year.*

## I

WHEN Lord Odo Russell, happily recovered from illness, returned to Berlin in September, he found the preparations for the meeting of the three emperors already far advanced, and the whole diplomatic world speculating on the new epoch that the visit would inaugurate. A feeling of excited anticipation had long been felt in the capital. The imperial visits had not been arranged without difficulty. Six years earlier Austria and Prussia had been engaged in armed conflict, and the relations between Russia and Austria had been strained ever since the latter had "astonished the world by her ingratitude" during the Crimean War. Originally, only Francis Joseph had been expected in Berlin, and the way had been carefully paved by previous interviews at Gastein and Salzburg. The implacable opposition of the Archduchess Sophie had hitherto been an insuperable obstacle to a visit to the capital of the new empire she hated to recognize, and Bismarck's persecution of the Church of which she was a most loyal daughter only confirmed her conviction that the two countries ought to have as little to do with each other as possible.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, although Andrassy had suggested the meeting as early as 17 April 1872, it was only on 20 June, after the death of the Archduchess, that the forthcoming visit was officially announced.<sup>2</sup> Almost immediately the Emperor Alexander proposed himself as a second guest,<sup>3</sup> an extraordinary gesture in view of Austro-Russian relations, but the Emperor William was very fond of his nephew and declared himself only too happy to welcome him at the same time.

It was to be expected that such a meeting would awaken public curiosity, and the newspapers made the most of the opportunity, assuming for the greater part, that the visit was a compliment to the new empire and a recognition of its greatness. It was hailed as a guarantee of peace in that France, ignorant of the strength

<sup>1</sup>Schweinitz I. 296.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 745. No. 178. To Lord Granville. 17 June 1872.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. I. p.197. At the time it was not known from whom the initiative came. Lord Augustus Loftus imagined that Andrassy suggested it (Lord A.G. II. 32) a current view also expressed by Gontaut-Biron (p.153) Lord Odo thought that Gorchakov had persuaded the Tsar to visit Berlin to checkmate Bismarck. Other people believed the Emperor William had invited his nephew spontaneously. See *Slavonic Review*, VIII, 400.

of the understanding between the emperors, would not dare to stir against Germany,<sup>1</sup> and it was hinted that the Emperor William would seize the opportunity to inaugurate a perpetual league of peace on the basis of the *status quo*.<sup>2</sup> The diplomatic body was equally interested and rumours were rife everywhere. The French Ambassador was heard to say that the question of an imperial or royal restoration in France in the event of the death of M. Thiers would be discussed.<sup>3</sup> At the Italian Embassy it was maintained that no agreement could possibly be reached by three powers whose interests were so divergent, but that the best that could be hoped for was that the emperors would convince each other of the importance of peace. The peaceful aim of the visit was emphasized by Karolyi to Gontaut-Biron.<sup>4</sup> Amid all these rumours appeared an official denial that the Austrian Emperor was going to hand over the insignia of the Holy Roman Empire<sup>5</sup>—a denial that was perhaps hardly necessary. Gontaut-Biron thought that Lord Odo Russell appeared preoccupied with the possible bearing of the meeting on the Eastern question rather than with its importance as a pacific demonstration against France.<sup>6</sup>

No pains were spared to make the occasion one for magnificent and stupendous military display, and Lord Odo Russell participated in most of the functions and festivities that turned Berlin into the parade-ground of Europe for the time being. He was present at a highly impressive parade displaying the technical perfection of the German army which could not fail to convince the emperors Francis Joseph and Alexander, to say nothing of the representatives of the other powers, that the new empire was strongly established on a firm military basis.<sup>7</sup> During the visit the emperors took precedence over each other alternately in each succeeding ceremony and the national hymns of each country were also played in rotation. On 7 September the diplomatic

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Plunkett to Lord Granville. 3 August 1872.

<sup>2</sup>Gontaut-Biron: *Memoirs*, p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 746. No. 44. Mr. Plunkett to Lord Granville. Confidential. 10 August 1872.

<sup>4</sup>Gontaut-Biron: *Memoirs*, p. 155.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 746. No. 74. Mr. Plunkett to Lord Granville. 24 August 1872.

<sup>6</sup>*D.D.F.I.* p. 188.

<sup>7</sup>*Times* 6-12 September 1872. So spectacular a demonstration would also be calculated to weaken the influence of the International, the menace of which formed an important subject of deliberation among the ministers.

corps was presented to the Emperor Francis Joseph at the Austrian Embassy; there was a grand reception at the Neues Palais on 8 September, and a dinner was given on the 9th. At this dinner Lord Odo Russell had interesting conversations with all three ministers, Andrassy, formerly known to him as a refugee, Gorchakov, whom he had met in difficult circumstances in Paris and Bismarck with whom he was on very cordial terms.<sup>1</sup>

Andrassy, who was avoiding conversation with the French Ambassador, expressed warm sympathy for England, and regret that her neutrality made an intimate and active co-operation impossible. A cordial alliance with Germany was a necessity for Austria's existence and he regarded the present meeting as a new and safe starting point. Maintenance of the *status quo* was the only possible policy in the East at the moment and he was in full agreement with Bismarck in excluding particular details from the meeting altogether.

Bismarck, beaming with satisfaction, was in an expansive mood. He took the success of the meeting entirely to himself. His object was fully attained, "For the first time in history three emperors had sat down to dinner together for the promotion of peace," and he hoped that England would acclaim him for it. He praised Andrassy, but spoke with a considerable amount of irritation against Gorchakov, as if he had found in him the principal obstacle to his plans.

Lord Odo Russell found the Russian statesman quite as well-pleased and cordial as Andrassy or as Bismarck himself. As was his way, he expressed himself at great length. After recalling his pleasant memories of English friends and particularly of Lord Granville, he asked that he might speak with the frankness that so pleasant an occasion made possible. It was less than two short years since he and Lord Odo Russell had been opponents over the Black Sea question but he was most anxious now to be affable and on friendly terms. Lord Odo was not the man to repel his advances and Gorchakov proceeded to propound his views and hopes.

He wanted friendship with England and peace in Europe, "So that he had insisted on his august master joining the emperors of Austria and Germany to complete what would have

<sup>1</sup>Full transcripts have been published by the present writer in the *Slavonic Review*. April 1930.

been incomplete without him." He confirmed Andrassy's statement that Bismarck had refused to discuss details, but he had insisted on speaking his mind on certain subjects. He had spoken freely about France. Bismarck knew he thought Prussian fears of France exaggerated and that Russia could not consent to see her weakened any further.

He spoke seriously about the danger of the International because he wanted it understood that the English Government did not see how powerful it was to sap the foundations of society. It was clear that he had gone into the question at length with both Bismarck and Andrassy, and that they had become convinced that while strong measures must be taken against subversive doctrines the relations between capital and labour required careful study and that real grievances should be remedied.<sup>1</sup>

He saw nothing but good in the change in the Austrian ministry. With Beust he had found it impossible to work but Andrassy "was an honest, straightforward, sensible and earnest patriot with whom he could establish a perfect understanding." There was one danger zone where this understanding was all-important—Turkey. Beust had refused his offer of maintaining the *status quo* "by good advice and non-interference," but he had renewed it with better success to Andrassy for he wanted peace, and any rumours to the contrary were mere calumny. "To give greater clearness to his views he had said to Andrassy that supposing disturbances broke out in European Turkey—a contingency he believed to be most unlikely—he meant by non-interference that the Turkish Government should be left to re-establish order by itself, with the moral support of Europe only. Active interference by Austria in the provinces of the Danube, Russia could never tolerate and must oppose by force."

It was an easy transition from Austrian designs on Turkey to Russian policy in Asia. Gorchakov blandly assured Lord Odo Russell that he flattered himself that some years ago he had overcome Lord Clarendon's unfounded suspicions of Russian ambitions in India and tried to convince him that the impending trouble in Khiva was of a very unimportant nature. "He had

<sup>1</sup>Shortly after this a conference of leading economists was held in Berlin, fully encouraged by Bismarck.

neither wish nor intention to conquer or keep any portion of Khiva. God forbid that he should annex such horrid people to the Russian Empire—his Emperor would not thank him for them.”<sup>1</sup> While on the subject of Central Asia he thought it well to mention that the Shah had expressed a wish to meet the Emperor of Russia.

Lord Odo Russell was not a principal at the meeting of the three emperors and the three ministers could only be expected to tell him what they wanted his government to learn, but judging from other accounts of their conversations among themselves he seems to have been on the whole accurately if not altogether fully informed.<sup>2</sup>

Gorchakov and Andrassy made good use of the opportunity to thresh out the Polish, Serbian and Turkish questions, and the Austrian statesman made it clear that in his opinion good relations between his own dangerously-placed country and Russia were essential. They were both in strong agreement about the menace of the International, and Andrassy went so far as to suggest that all the Powers should be invited to sign a measure prohibiting congresses which posed as cosmopolitan governments. Their mutual fear of the International put them on good terms with each other and in this accommodating frame of mind they both spoke very freely and did not hesitate to ask nor shrink from answering leading questions.

Andrassy made as favourable an impression on Gorchakov as he had already done on Bismarck, but Gorchakov, grating sadly on Bismarck’s nerves, did not find him nearly so communicative as Andrassy. Underneath the smooth surface there already lurked the hostility which was later to disturb the relations between them. But this feeling was personal, and it was perhaps going too far to state that “the Berlin interview loosened Russo-German ties instead of consolidating them.”<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile Lord Odo Russell was writing his impressions to Lord Granville. While he believed that a new era in the balance of power had been opened he did not think that every burning question had been discussed and settled.

<sup>1</sup>In June 1873 the Russians conquered Khiva.

<sup>2</sup>*Slavonic Review* VIII. 400-408.

<sup>3</sup>*Slavonic Review*. VIII. 401. Quoting Wertheimer, *Andrassy* II. 75.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 12 September 1872.<sup>1</sup>—

“... I believe that Prince Bismarck originally intended to form an alliance with Austria without Russia for the protection of German interests only, and at the same time to liberate the new German Empire from the protectorate the Czar has ever sought to impose upon the King of Prussia.

Prince Gorchakov, seeing the danger to which an Austro-German alliance and the consequent isolation of Russia with no ally but bleeding France exposed his country, persuaded his august master to travel five days and nights from the Crimea to Berlin, with those members of his family whose French sympathies were suspicious to Germany, in order to neutralize the exclusive character of the Austro-German meeting, and assert by his presence and that of his heir the traditional protectorate of Russia over Prussia.

The Emperor William, having accepted the Czar's unexpected and self-invited co-operation, Prince Bismarck was obliged to make the best of an unsought-for and unavoidable combination which his fertile imagination and boundless resources will readily turn to Germany's advantage.

Count Andrassy will feel the failure of his fondest hopes. A German alliance was to give strength and independence to his country. Austria, backed by invincible Germany, would be strong against her enemies at home and independent of her enemies beyond the Danube. But with France crushed and England neutral a Russo-German protectorate may gradually convert her to a vassal of both. . . .”

Lord Odo Russell was not in error in thinking that nothing definite had been signed. The new situation in Europe was not yet sufficiently crystallized for a solid grouping of the Powers yet to be possible. He was right when he said that the original intention not to include Russia had been frustrated by her natural desire not to be excluded from any possible agreement between the Central Powers; but was it not Andrassy who exploited the meeting to Austria's advantage? Nothing, as Lord Odo Russell pointed out, could be less enviable than her position if Germany and Russia chose to put her in a subordinate place, but the British Ambassador seems to have failed to take into account in

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 746. No. 222.

his analysis the vital fact that Bismarck having annexed Alsace Lorraine was not a free agent against Austria. With consummate ability Andrassy secured a personal triumph which was to prove the first step towards the goal he was to attain six years later.

Bismarck, on the other hand, had been touched on a raw spot. While Andrassy was reassured about panslavism in the Balkans, Bismarck's anxieties were not in the least allayed about French revenge on the Vosges. If Gorchakov expressed himself to him with anything like the freedom he used to Lord Odo Russell and to Gontaut-Biron, he must have had it brought home to him as early as 1872 that Gorchakov "had no interest in the weakness of France; on the contrary he wished for a strong and prudent France."

The final festivity, a court concert, was a brilliant ceremony. At 9.30 the doors of the reception room were flung open and the imperial procession, led by the Empress, who gave an arm to each of her illustrious guests, made its dignified way towards the round salon, where the concert was to take place. At one table sat the three Emperors with the Empress, the duchess of Mecklenburg, the grand-duchess of Baden and the grand-duke of Saxe-Weimar. Lord Odo Russell was at the table of the Crown Princess, together with Andrassy, Gorchakov, Gontaut-Biron, Schweinitz, Princess Schoenburg and Princess Hatzfeldt. The Austrian and Russian Ambassadors were at another table. During the interval the French Ambassador found an opportunity of asking Lord Odo quietly if he knew anything of what had passed, and said he had heard rumours that Germany had been approached by Russia and Austria with a view to establishing friendly and conciliatory relations with France. His colleague could only repeat Bismarck's remarks about the three emperors and the tableau of peace he had wished to present to the world and tell him the opinion he had formed from the conversations of Andrassy and Gorchakov. He added that the more he saw the more he was convinced that the Emperor Alexander was present without the goodwill of Bismarck.<sup>1</sup> Gontaut-Biron gathered a general impression that Lord Odo Russell had shown a certain coldness in his attitude at court during the festivities and mentioned that Germany was not very

<sup>1</sup>*Gontaut-Biron*, p.168.



well disposed towards England, and when a little later a newspaper hostility broke out between England and Germany it was certainly made a matter of reproach that the unilluminated British Embassy had formed a dismal contrast to those of Russia and Austria, but no trace of this coolness is to be marked in his despatches, and the suggestion of constraint seems rather discountenanced by the long conversations with which he was favoured. In one respect, indeed his position was delicate. He represented a great Power, but one that had played a passive part in recent European diplomacy. He himself, therefore, could take no active rôle in the meeting, but had to content himself with the position of spectator.

The Emperors left Berlin on 12 September, distributing largesse to the amount of about £900 each,<sup>1</sup> but leaving the world at large not much wiser than it had been before. The official announcement "that no special policy beyond a common agreement to avoid in future a breach of the peace had been discussed during the meeting of the three Emperors" merely served to deepen the mystery and the rumours. Four years were to pass before the German Emperor was to admit to Queen Victoria that the agreement come to in 1872 at Berlin provided "that all important political questions should, as far as possible, be discussed *à trois*."<sup>2</sup>

The violent newspaper warfare which broke out did not greatly disturb Lord Odo Russell.

*To Lord Granville.* 19 October 1872.<sup>3</sup>—

"... All things considered, I cannot but think that however sensitive the public press may be under the present transitional circumstances, about foreign criticism, the seeds of a cordial understanding with us lie buried in the depths of the German mind, and that the blessings of peace, freedom and public life are necessary to drain the land before these seeds can ripen into the international friendship and goodwill both countries must have so much at heart in the future. . . ."

The press agitation soon found new food to feed upon. A

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 772. No. 320. To Lord Granville. 13 June 1873.

<sup>2</sup>Buckle: *Q.V.* II. 460.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 747. No. 269.

commercial treaty had just been concluded between France and England, which was made public shortly after the meeting between the three Emperors. The impression it made in Berlin was very bad, for Lord Odo Russell found that it was not regarded as a commercial transaction, but rather as a riposte to the secret alliance suspected to have been made between the Northern Powers.<sup>1</sup> The treaty certainly helped to sharpen the edge of Bismarck's fear at the now obvious recovery of France and manifested itself in a thinly disguised hostility to Thiers<sup>2</sup> and was as clear to Lord Odo in Berlin<sup>3</sup> as to Lord Lyons in Paris.

## II

Bismarck's mistrust of Thiers was not removed by his Spanish policy. The abdication of King Amadeo in February 1873 made the French Government fear that Bismarck would exploit the crisis to make Spain a dangerous enemy to France. Lord Odo Russell agreed that the fear was well founded.

*To Lord Granville.* Confidential. 22 February 1873.—

" . . . A practical statesman like Prince Bismarck, intent on consolidating the national edifice he has founded, and establishing the supremacy of his own country on a military, monarchical and protestant basis, and having still before him the task of fighting the three-fold war of revenge with France, the Pope and republicanism, will not waste the opportunity once more brought about in Spain of depriving France of an ally, popery of a refuge and republicanism of a basis of operations in Europe. The establishment of another republic in Europe will be looked upon as a dangerous example to Germany by her rulers, and doubly so if by enjoying the cordial sympathy of liberal England and France, republican Spain appears to add to the moral influence of France and her allies.

It is difficult to penetrate Prince Bismarck's policy, but so long as it is anti-republican in principle he is sure of the alliance of Russia and Austria in regard to Spain. . . ."

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 748. No. 305. To Lord Granville. 16 November 1872.

<sup>2</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 34.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 748. No. 350. To Lord Granville. 17 December 1872.

The hopes of Thiers extended to a triple entente between England, Russia and France, but Lord Lyons, rather sceptical of his suggestion that Bismarck was working in favour of a Hohenzollern candidate, gave him no encouragement.<sup>1</sup> The Chancellor soon heard of his move because the Russian Government, seeing no cause to hide it from him as they were about to conclude the German military convention,<sup>2</sup> told him all about it, and Lord Odo Russell was informed that France had failed to detach Russia from Germany. But the little flutter caused great anger in Berlin, and the Emperor was betrayed by his feelings to express to Russell his conviction that he thought the French policy very suspicious, though he hastily added: "Pray forget those words which were not addressed to the British Ambassador but only to my old Versailles friend for his private information," and he proceeded to commend Thiers for the promptitude with which the indemnity was being paid. Then he said meaningly that a French war of revenge must eventually break out.<sup>3</sup>

This warning made a deep impression on Lord Odo, and he determined to see what Bismarck had to say on the subject of Thiers's policy.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 2 April 1873.—

"... I asked His Highness whether ... he had any reason to think the policy of M. Thiers in regard to Portugal and Spain in any way open to suspicion?

Prince Bismarck replied that he gathered from my questions that I knew it was so, and he gladly availed himself of this opportunity to ask me in strict confidence whether I thought H.M.G. were favouring the Carlists and furnishing them with arms and money to place Don Carlos on the throne of Spain.

I said I was surprised and distressed at what he told me, as M. Thiers must be perfectly aware that H.M.G. adhered strictly, frankly and conscientiously to a policy of non-interference, and had no other wish than to see the people of Spain settle their own affairs on a national basis calculated to give them peace and prosperity at home and abroad.

<sup>1</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 40.

<sup>2</sup>G.P. I. pp.202-203.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 770. No. 179. To Lord Granville. Secret. 2 April 1873.

Prince Bismarck replied that he felt greatly relieved at what I said, for he was convinced that foreign influences would only prolong the struggle in Spain. The policy I attributed to H.M.G. was the policy he wished to follow himself and he earnestly desired to act with England at all times in maintaining the tranquillity of Europe.

I said I was equally glad to hear him say so himself, as I could not conceal from him that I had heard him accused of wishing to influence the fate of Spain.

Prince Bismarck in reply assured me that nothing could be farther from his intention, and that he anxiously desired to adhere to a policy of strict non-intervention—but that he felt bitterly disappointed at discovering so much double dealing and intrigue in M. Thiers's foreign policy.

M. Thiers was secretly working to detach Russia from Germany, and trying to foment discord in S. Germany, and, as he had just confided to me, M. Thiers was now trying to cast suspicion on H.M.G. in respect of Spain.

But the grossest attempt at deceit M. Thiers had endeavoured to practise on him was in appointing a Polish refugee as French Consul at Breslau. In the Consular Mission sent from Paris to Berlin the spelling of the consul's Polish name had been altered so as to make it appear French and his Christian name of Ladislas had been altogether suppressed.

Not suspecting any treachery, the usual exequatur had been granted, and it was not until the consul had joined his post that his identity was established and the object of his appointment discovered.

Not wishing to give publicity to so base an intrigue, he had refrained from sending the consul at once to the frontier, but he had privately notified to M. Thiers that he must recall his agent in 48 hours from Breslau if he wished to avoid a public scandal.<sup>1</sup>

Having expressed the surprise I felt at Prince Bismarck's statements, I asked whether he knew what M. Thiers's wishes for Spain were?

The Prince Chancellor explained that M. Thiers's secret communication had not gone beyond proposing a joint understanding to prevent England from placing her candidate don

<sup>1</sup>Bismarck's tirade against Thiers seems to me a typical example of the way in which he sometimes worked himself into a fury against an opponent on information which can only be supposed to have been afforded by his numerous army of spies. There were to be many more such instances in his dealings with the ultramontanes and with the French.

Carlos on the throne of Spain, so as to enable the people of Spain to make their own choice—but he had not said what in his opinion the free choice of the Spaniards ought to be. . . .”

Lord Odo Russell’s language met with the fullest approval from the British Government. Whatever foreign intriguers might suggest, don Carlos was not a prince Lord Granville desired to see among the crowned heads of Europe. At the same time Bismarck’s disclosures were extraordinary. As Thiers fell from power the following month they ceased to have anything more than an academic interest, though they may account for Bismarck’s cynical regret at his resignation as “under him France was less likely to make useful alliances than under a monarchical government.”

As it was only three years since Spanish complications had precipitated a crisis ending in war, considerable stir was caused by an official article which stated that “the union of the three Emperors gains so much more in importance and immediate weight the more the prospects of a quiet and lasting development are obscured in the western states of the Continent.”<sup>1</sup> Both the French Ambassador and the Spanish Agent called on Lord Odo Russell separately to express their concern at this statement, which they could only regard as a veiled threat, but Russell, on the contrary, when he heard them say that they did not think Bismarck would have allowed it to be published had he been in Berlin, thought it fully represented Bismarck’s views, for he would not in the least mind France and Spain realizing the existence of the new orientation of Powers.<sup>2</sup>

In any case the internal affairs of Spain presented themselves to Bismarck “as an open sore in Europe, which must, he thought, be left to heal itself.”<sup>3</sup> For many months Spain was indeed in a lamentable condition, and one in which foreign diplomacy was impotent to help. There were confused conflicts between federalists, republicans and Carlists, not to mention abortive complications caused by communists, so that it was not until the beginning of 1874 that there was even a remote prospect of a

<sup>1</sup>The article was commenting on the Kaiser’s recent visit to St. Petersburg.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 771. No. 245. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 7 May 1873.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 244. 265. No. 219. *Ibid.* Secret. 23 April 1873.

lasting régime. The unhappy spectacle had long convinced Bismarck that Spain was no country for a German prince to rule (though France remained apprehensive on the point for a long time)<sup>1</sup> and he began to direct his policy towards the support of any government that could at the same time secure foreign recognition and repel French Carlist intrigues. In February 1874 Marshal Serrano formed a government which proved more stable than those of the previous year, but the Carlists still showed great activity and Bülow was probably the mouthpiece of Bismarck when he accused France from legitimist and ultra-montane views of desiring to place the Comte de Chambord on the throne of France and Don Carlos on that of Spain.<sup>2</sup>

The murder in Spain of a German subject named Schmidt was attributed by Bismarck to the assistance given by France to the Carlists and he went to far as to suggest that England should remonstrate with the French Government and did not agree with the English view that this was impossible as no complaint of such assistance had been made by the Spanish Government itself.<sup>3</sup> He almost decided to send a squadron to Spanish waters<sup>4</sup> but in the end contented himself with the despatch of gun-boats only. But by this time he had decided to invite the Powers to recognize Serrano, and was gratified by England's agreement. The significance he attached to it was that although Serrano's Government could not be described as stable, yet the very fact of foreign recognition might give it a rallying point and so lead to a termination of the civil war.<sup>5</sup> France followed his lead, and so, after a short time, did Austria. Russia delayed recognition.

Henceforward Bismarck showed extreme reluctance to discuss Spanish affairs, but in November he addressed a confidential circular to the German representatives abroad stating that no objection to the restoration of the monarchy in the person of Prince Alphonso would be raised by Germany, Russia or Austria if the people of Spain were to pronounce in its favour.<sup>6</sup> This

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.333.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Adams to Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 30 July 1874.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 805. No number given.

<sup>4</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.338.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 805. No. 101. Mr. Adams to Lord Derby. 11 August 1874.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 64. 824. No. 13. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 15 January 1875.

circular was not known to Lord Odo Russell until later, but he heard, though not through official channels, that Bismarck suspected Serrano of unduly prolonging the war with the Carlists to keep himself in power; he also heard that Bismarck had a foreign candidate ready, but he gave no credence to this rumour, for he believed that it was rather Bismarck's policy to allow the Spaniards to make their own choice.<sup>1</sup> They did so, and it lighted on Alphonso, who was proclaimed on 31 December 1874 as Alphonso XII. Russia and Austria recognized him immediately, but this time Germany lagged behind for a while. Although the semi-official press took the line that his accession was the logical outcome of the Serrano administration, Münster informed Lord Derby that his Government, although pleased at the accession of the king, wished to make formal recognition dependent upon an assurance that religious toleration would be respected. Lord Derby's view was that, anxious as he was for religious liberty, he doubted "whether it was consistent with diplomatic usage to make such recognition conditional on the adoption of a particular line of policy."<sup>2</sup> In consideration of this attitude on the part of the British Government Bismarck announced that Alphonso would be recognized as soon as sufficient proof was afforded that he commanded the support of his own people, but as strange rumours were going round Bülow thought it well to deny to Lord Odo Russell that Germany had been in any way secretly behind the success of the King, and even went so far as to hint that the real power behind the restoration was Decazes, but by this time Lord Odo had heard of the November circular and suggested that Germany had at least anticipated what was coming. All Bülow could say then was that the German Government had no part in the movement and was unprepared for its rapid success which was due to Serrano's lack of policy and desire to create a septennate for himself.<sup>3</sup> Before the new government was recognized a complication arose when a Carlist outrage upon

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 807. No. 315. To Lord Derby. 5 December 1874.

<sup>2</sup>Lord Derby to Odo Russell. F.O. 64. 822. No. 9. 12 January 1875. A strange rumour having arisen in Berlin that the proposal of conditional recognition had originated with Great Britain, Lord Odo Russell thought it his duty to explain carefully the British position as outlined by Lord Derby. F.O. 64. 824. No. 33. To Lord Derby. 23 January 1875.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 824. No. 13. To Lord Derby. 15 January 1875.

the German ship *Gustav* aroused universal indignation in Berlin. Popular sentiment would have approved a conflict between the German navy and the Carlists, but its ardour was damped down by Bismarck, who proceeded to obtain redress through the ordinary but less spectacular channels. He did not want the question of recognition delayed still further.<sup>1</sup>

Official notification of the accession of the king was received towards the end of January. There was no question of a simultaneous recognition, though Lord Odo Russell suspected a design on the part of Germany, Russia and Austria to recognize the monarchy before any other Power had time to do so.<sup>2</sup> Very shortly afterwards King Alphonso conferred the Order of the Golden Fleece on Bismarck. The Emperor himself told Lord Odo Russell that the Order was well-deserved and that "King Alphonso owed his throne to Prince Bismarck because the prince's accession to it had been the condition on which Bismarck had arranged to recognize Marshal Serrano's Government as the stepping-stone to monarchy. Prince Bismarck had managed well, the Emperor thought, and deserved great credit as well as the Golden Fleece for his success." Lord Odo congratulated Bismarck, who made no attempt to conceal his gratification and pleasure, "because it would teach the French that King Alphonso knew and acknowledged his real friends and because it showed that the young king was not yet ungrateful." But he was not optimistic about the future. The ultramontane spectre loomed too large on the horizon and he concluded that "it was a matter of perfect indifference to him who was the king of Spain, Don Alphonso or Don Carlos so long as the country was well administered and prosperous under a liberal, tolerant and enlightened government."<sup>3</sup>

This was Bismarck's consistent attitude henceforth. The five years of anarchy and strife through which Spain had just passed had led her to play a passive but not unimportant part in his plans. The accession of King Alphonso meant a new phase in the history of a country that had once given him his great opportunity, and had more recently afforded Thiers the

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 824. No. 31. To Lord Derby. 23 January 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 45. Most Confidential. 30 January 1875.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 825. No. 118. To Lord Derby. Secret. 9 March 1875. Add: MSS. 39007. p.339. B.M. Berlin. O.R. to Layoud. Private. 20 March 1875.



first faint glimpse of hope of climbing back into the Concert of Europe.

## III

Humiliated by foreign occupation and enslaved by debt, France was paying the heavy price of her opposition to German unity. The cruel blow had fallen suddenly and at first the disaster had all the appearance of an impossible nightmare, which distracted France with agony and despair, but no one knew better than Bismarck that this mood would develop into a less passive and more dangerous one for which he must never cease to be prepared. His plan of keeping her helpless, and her policy, of making herself strong for the day of revenge, made the relations between the two countries a constant menace to the peace of Europe.

The arrangement of the terms of the payment of the indemnity and consequent evacuation of French soil afforded ample grounds for anxiety, and the neutral countries, uninterested in the tedious details of the negotiations, were only too anxious for them to succeed. As France began to think about the payment of the last milliard in March 1873, she was not alone in her anticipation of relief. The thought of a war of revenge which the Germans represented to Lord Odo Russell as unavoidable, filled him with forebodings, and hoping that the payment of the fifth milliard in monthly instalments of 250 million Fr. from 1 June might result in a final evacuation by October he could not refrain from expressing his relief.<sup>1</sup> But the sky above France and Germany was not so easily cleared. The aftermath of war was perhaps one of the least dangerous of the clouds. Spain, ultramontanism, legitimism in turn darkened the horizon, and although one cloud might dissolve the great pall did not lighten. Germany wished to normalize the existing state of affairs—France was fiercely determined eventually to reverse it.

By October 1873 relations were in a high state of tension.

<sup>1</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 41.

Talk of a royal restoration aroused fears in Germany that the triumph of the legitimists would mean active support of ultramontaniam within the Empire and hints of papal and Bourbon intrigues to effect a restoration of Poland fanned these fears into a fierce flame which found its usual expression in an unprincipled press campaign, calling on the watchful spirit of Bismarck to ward off the danger.<sup>1</sup> This particular danger passed by. No restoration took place, either of Poland or the French monarchy, and Marshal MacMahon was established instead as president, but the religious question now became acute. Bismarck, holding the French Government responsible for the anti-German tone of the Bishop of Nancy's pastoral, made strong representations to the Quai d'Orsay. Before leaving for Varzin the Chancellor paid Lord Odo Russell a visit to discuss with him the problems of the day, and particularly France.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 22 December 1873.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Prince Bismarck paid me a long visit and talked over the topics of the day with his usual cynical originality. When, however, he came to talk of the trial of Marshal Bazaine which he condemned in powerful invectives as an act of national madness, he spoke of the French with more bitterness than usual.

I asked whether he was not satisfied with the turn affairs had taken in France, and whether he did not think a MacMahon presidency preferable to a Chambord monarchy?

He replied that he preferred Chambord to MacMahon, because he was the greater fool of the two.

I said I was thinking of the good of France for her own sake, and not of the advantages Germany might derive from a fool on the throne.

Prince Bismarck said that from a purely French point of view he agreed with me, but that he had to think of Germany, and the peace of Europe before the welfare of France.

I said that France was not in a position to disturb the peace of Europe for many years to come.

The Chancellor replied that her power of making war would depend on the alliances she was able to contract.

I observed that His Highness had already secured the most

<sup>1</sup>*Deutsche Nachrichten.* 24 October 1873.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 777. No. 443.

powerful alliances of Europe for Germany and that there were none left for France to make.

'That was true,' the Prince said, 'if he could be sure of them, which he was not, because alliances sometimes depended on the lives of single individuals.'

I asked whether he meant that the French Government were seeking alliances against Germany with any prospect of success?

He said, of course it was their duty to do so—as it was his to watch their proceedings and their proceedings were imprudent and unwise.

I asked what he meant?

Prince Bismarck rose from his chair, walked up and down the room, and then, lowering his voice, said that the French Government were sending military agents in plain clothes into Germany to study the ground with a view to a future campaign—that they had even taken soundings along the coast of Holstein to ascertain the best places for landing troops, but that he was having them carefully followed and watched.

That did not look like peaceful intentions, he said, and if they intended revenge, he would greatly prefer to fight it out at once and declare war to-morrow than wait until they were prepared to attack.

I said that the weakened state of France precluded every excuse for war.

He replied that an excuse for war was easily found—he had some experience in such matters.

I said I was extremely sorry to hear him say so because Germany would lose the sympathies of all the world if she rushed into an unjust and unnecessary war.

Prince Bismarck said that security for Germany and peace for Europe were the objects he had at heart—the unwise proceedings of the French Government irritated him—but he hoped he might be mistaken as he had been in the days of Louis Philippe, when he thought for several years that war was inevitable between France and England—but that danger had passed away, and had been followed by the alliance of the two countries, and he sincerely hoped that time and circumstances might prove as favourable to Germany.

Our conversation was interrupted by a message from the Emperor, summoning the Chancellor to His Majesty's presence at the palace. . . ."

Bismarck was not without provocation, however cynically he

may have expressed his fears and preoccupations. On this very day the French Ambassador himself was deploring the lamentable impression made by a diplomatic memorial issued by his Government three days before, and all wondered whether the tension would really end in war after all. Lord Odo Russell did not think so. He knew that military circles were active but he knew also that the Emperor and the Crown Prince were pacific, and was convinced that Bismarck's attitude, as always, was determined by policy. The whole future of Germany depended upon an overwhelming standing army, but the leaders of the National Liberals had to be convinced that the burden was necessary, for they had already forced Bismarck to withdraw the Army Bill by a threat to throw it out if it were foisted on them before the elections, which were imminent. Bismarck needed a lever—and here was one ready to his hand. . . . "By raising a cry against France on the eve of the general elections Prince Bismarck will enable his supporters to vote for the Army Bill which they declared themselves last session unable to render palatable to their electors in times of peace and security—and when voted the new organization of the army will render the imperial Government invincible in Germany as well as abroad. . . ."<sup>1</sup> He felt that his opinion was confirmed a few days later when Moltke said at a military dinner that another war was inevitable before many years and that he would "look upon any legislator who voted against the new Army Bill as a traitor to the Fatherland. . . ."<sup>2</sup> This was also Count Münster's opinion.

However foolish their policy, Bismarck's language had the effect of thoroughly frightening the French Government. The French Ambassador in Berlin, a courtly old gentleman of a former school of diplomacy, could not understand the new methods at all and he began to bethink himself what action to take. Remembering that Gorchakov had shown a kindly interest in the recovery of France at the meeting of the three Emperors, and observing that in his recent journey through Berlin he had seen neither the Emperor nor Bismarck, he conceived the idea that some good might be done if he paid a personal visit to St. Petersburg and had a talk with him.<sup>3</sup> He almost lost heart when

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 801. No. 1. To Lord Granville. Secret. 2 January 1874.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 16. Secret. 9 January 1874.

<sup>3</sup>D.D.F. I. p.288.

he considered Bismarck's iron determination to isolate France. ". . . By his cleverness," he lamented, "and by the military power Germany wields he imposes his alliance upon almost the whole of continental Europe and I should not be surprised if he tried to induce England to enter this league against France. The relations with Lord Odo Russell are of a sufficiently close intimacy, but I can tell you nothing precise with regard to this. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Had he known the tone of Russell's remarks to Bismarck, he might have been reassured about England, but a French Ambassador who decided to visit Russia at this juncture was taking grave risks for the future.

Perhaps with the object of finding out how the ground lay with regard to England, Decazes tried to enlist her sympathy. First disarming suspicion by the issue of a circular requesting the bishops to abstain from prudence and patriotism from publicly condemning the acts of foreign governments, he suggested to Lord Granville that a few words from Lord Odo Russell at Berlin might carry great weight in the existing tense state of Franco-German relations over the Ultramontane controversy. Without giving an immediate answer to Decazes, Granville instructed Russell to tell Bülow in confidence that H.M.G. "believed that France was acting in good faith in her endeavours to free herself from her former Roman policy, and hoped that the German Government would do all they could to assist her." <sup>2</sup>

Although these representations may have betrayed a certain naïvete on the part of Granville, Bülow and Bismarck thought it diplomatic to adopt a conciliatory tone. Lord Odo was assured that Germany "in the interests of peace only" intended "friendly and timely warning" of the danger of ultramontane intrigues. Bismarck was equally disarming in his speech at the opening of the Reichstag and even said to Gontaut-Biron in a most friendly manner that he hoped he was satisfied with that part of his speech which dealt with foreign affairs. Whether he would have been so gracious if he had known that Gontaut-Biron was just about to start for the Russian capital is another matter. By this time, though, Lord Odo Russell had begun to wonder what

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* I. pp.288-9.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 244. 276. No. 24. To Lord Odo Russell. Confidential. 23 January 1874.

underlay Bismarck's bluff, and he pondered on the possibility of Germany's complete union being dependent on yet another appeal to arms.<sup>1</sup> His fears were shared by the Queen, who wrote a personal letter to the Emperor William on the subject of European peace.<sup>2</sup> While he was protesting his pacific sentiments in his reply,<sup>3</sup> Gontaut-Biron was trying to enlist Russian sympathy for France in St. Petersburg.

He made an impressive departure from Berlin. Without breathing a word about his intended visit he gave a magnificent ball, to which he invited everybody of importance, from the imperial family downwards. Only the Prince and Princess Bismarck were not there. They never went to balls on Sundays. The Ambassador's sudden disappearance the next day caused much gossip. The incredulous smiled at the explanation that he was going for a rest and change of air, and "thought his sudden departure . . . with two French Ambassadors already at St. Petersburg and the Emperor of Austria already on a visit to the Emperor of Russia more likely to be connected with public affairs . . . than mere recreation." Bismarck was anxious to impress Lord Odo Russell with the fact that he attached no political importance to the visit whatever,<sup>4</sup> but his hatred of the French Ambassador never abated after that time.

While Berlin was speculating on the object of Gontaut-Biron's visit, Bismarck was trying to impress upon Lord Derby the delicacy of the diplomatic situation in other quarters. Count Münster was instructed to draw his attention to an Ultramontane plot to annex Belgium to France, and Bülow informed Lord Odo Russell that the object of the warning was to protect Belgian independence by a timely hint to H.M.G. The severe struggle for the army bill was going on simultaneously in the Reichstag, and it was to this unhappy state of affairs that Gontaut-Biron returned on 12 March. He must have found it trying, for he had encountered a very different atmosphere in Russia, where everybody had been most kind and sympathetic.<sup>5</sup>

The tension between France and Germany tightened from day

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 802. No. 67. To Lord Granville. Secret. 7 February 1874.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. 313-4.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* 325-328.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 802. No. 87. 20 February 1874.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 803. No. 127. To Lord Derby. 16 March 1874.

to day. The Belgian Government, so far from being impressed by Bismarck's hints, retorted that Count Arnim had asserted not so very long ago that "Holland . . . was destined some day or other to form part of the German Empire. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Lord Odo, as usual, tried to disentangle rumour from fact. The subject of Holland had already been discussed between him and Bismarck as far back as 11 February 1873.

*To Lord Derby. 27 March 1874.*<sup>2</sup>—

" . . . This idea was utterly unfounded. No German Government could ever desire nor would public opinion ever consent to the annexation of the Netherlands to the German Empire. Germany had long struggled for national unity, and now that it was happily established he thought forty millions of united Germans were sufficient to maintain the national independence they had acquired, without having to resort to the conquest of peaceful, industrious and friendly neighbours like the Dutch.

He neither desired colonies nor fleets for Germany. Colonies, in his opinion, would only be a cause of weakness, because colonies could only be defended by a powerful fleet, and Germany's geographical position did not necessitate her development into a first-class maritime power. A fleet was sufficient for Germany that could cope with fleets like those of Austria, Turkey, Egypt, Holland and perhaps Italy—scarcely with that of Russia—but it could not be a German interest, so long as she had no colonies, to rivalize with maritime powers like England, America or France.

Many colonies had been offered to him—he had rejected them all, as he only wished for coaling stations acquired by treaty from other nations, etc., etc.

Since the date of the above conversation, Prince Bismarck has repeatedly spoken to me in the same sense on the subject of the Netherlands, and I have noticed no change in his views on the subject of colonies and a fleet for the German Empire. . . ."

The provocative language which Bismarck had been lately using was intended, Lord Odo Russell felt sure, to get the army

<sup>1</sup>No. 140. To Lord Derby. 27 March 1874.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

bill passed through the Reichstag in the form which Bismarck desired.

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 27 March 1874.—

"... These rumours will die out when the army bill becomes law in the course of next month. Whatever the intentions of Prince Bismarck as regards war may be in the future, I think we may look forward to the year 1874, so far as Germany is concerned, as one of peace, the guarantees of which are the Emperor's failing health, Prince Bismarck's serious illness and convalescence, the very pacific spirit of the German people displayed in the reorganization of their army, the unmistakable longing for peace of the German people, and the total absence of outer aggression to provoke or even excuse war. . . ."

War did not break out, but the whole summer was passed in a state of uneasy irritation. Lord Odo Russell was spared much of this, for he spent the greater part of it on leave, in London and Carlsbad, but when he returned to Berlin early in October he found the situation far worse than he had left it. The French press had worked itself up into a state of "incessant buzzing and stinging,"<sup>1</sup> and the Emperor had taken up the challenge in his speech at the opening of the Reichstag.

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 31 October 1874.<sup>2</sup>—

"... H.M. disclaims any intention of employing the united power of the Empire for any other purpose than defence; indeed it is that very power which enables his Government to be silent in the face of unjust accusations due to ill-will and party spirit until they assume the shape of deeds. Then H.M. knows that, for the right and honour of the Empire he can reckon on the support of the whole nation and their rulers. . . ."

"... The speech will probably raise unfounded hopes in Spain and affect the money market in France, while it will cause irritation in Russia and exasperation in the Catholic world. To the

<sup>1</sup>*Times*. 28 October 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 806. No. 253.



query why Prince Bismarck thought it necessary to make his Sovereign adopt a defiant tone when all the world wishes to live at peace with Germany, I have heard the following answers—because the armaments of France and the attitude of the Catholics in Europe are menacing to Germany, because France is assisting the Carlists, because the press of Europe must be warned not to calumniate Prince Bismarck's policy, because the German parliament must be alarmed into voting the Landsturm bill and the military budget, because it suits the policy of Prince Bismarck to frighten France and keep Europe in hot water etc., etc.

Be that as it may, I do not for my part believe that Prince Bismarck meant more than what he made the Emperor say. . . .”

The French Government took a more alarmist view, and Gorchakov, passing through Berlin soon after, thought it well to give a broad hint that Russia was interested in the maintenance of peace, and Orlov was instructed to use similar language in Paris. . . . “France has nothing to fear from Germany at present, because Russia is virtually mistress of the situation, and Russia is resolved that the peace of Europe shall not be broken. . . .” This language was furiously resented in Berlin.

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 28 November 1874.<sup>1</sup>—

“ . . . Although it may not be of any great importance, I take note of the fact because I hear from so many sides that it has given great offence in official, military and court circles in Berlin, where since the creation of the German Empire, the former assumption of superiority over Prussia by Russia is no longer admitted, and where the maintenance of peace in Europe is thought solely to depend on the will of Germany. . . .”

The French Government soon found fresh cause of alarm in rumours that military manœuvres were being planned on a large scale for the following spring. Although the British military attaché Walker shared Lord Odo Russell's less sensational

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 807. No. 305.

opinion that such scares were not to be taken seriously, the following spring did indeed bring about a crisis of the first magnitude. This crisis is only to be understood in the light of all that had gone before.

THE WAR SCARE  
[1875]

*"I believed then (at Metz in 1891) as I still believe, that the most potent cause of the fear which Continental nations display towards their neighbours, is not the potential strength of armies, but rather the state of immediate readiness in which the armies are maintained. When fear reaches a climax, war results."*

—SIR GEORGE ASTON. *Secret Service.* p.44.

*First phase*—the Radowitz Mission—Bismarck's vigorous policy against the Ultramontanes in Belgium, Italy and France—fears of war—Lord Odo's confidence that peace would be maintained—Lord Derby's conversation with Count Münster—Russell's views confirmed—continued apprehension of Decazes—Lord Odo Russell's repeated assurances—the strain felt in Italy—press violence—Lord Odo's alarm—Bülow's belief in French desire for war of revenge—influences brought to bear upon the press to gain a more conciliatory tone—the assurances of the Emperor Alexander II to Le Figaro.

*Second phase*—the dinner at the British Embassy—Radowitz on preventive war—Gontaut-Biron's report—its accuracy confirmed by Karolyi's conversation with Russell a few days later—all Europe feels the tension—visit of Belgian Ambassador to Lord Odo Russell—Russell's conversation with Moltke—its importance—"secret reports"—conversation between Decazes and Hohenlohe—the *Times* article—general opinion that action must be taken.

*The intervention*—Instructions to Lord Odo Russell—arrival of the Emperor of Russia in Berlin—discussion of situation between Bismarck and Russell at dinner—Gorchakov's arrival—Bismarck's irritation—conversation between Gorchakov and Russell—varying accounts—concern of Lord Odo Russell on learning that the Queen intended to write to the Russian Emperor—the letter sent—Bismarck's surprise—Austria's support of Bismarck—sudden collapse of war rumours—Gorchakov's farewell conversation with Russell—the effect of the intervention on Bismarck's nerves—statement in the press—Bismarck's retirement to Varzin.

## I

"The danger which Prince Bismarck dreads most at present is an understanding between Russia, France and Austria, which would isolate Germany and unite her ultramontane enemies."<sup>1</sup>

SO thought Lord Odo Russell when at the beginning of February 1875 Radowitz was sent on his mysterious mission to Russia. He saw signs that Gorchakov was "coquetting with France," and informed Lord Derby that he believed the mission was connected with the most important question of the day.

At the beginning of 1875 Bismarck's difficulties were indeed stupendous. Less than five years had passed since he had raised Protestant Prussia to a dazzling preminence in Europe. The first flush of triumph was over, and the enemies who had hated his success were (so at least Bismarck persuaded himself) plotting day and night for his downfall. The Kulturkampf had assumed titanic proportions, and the possible result of the struggle haunted him unceasingly. If the disintegrating forces within the Empire were to make common cause with its external foes the work with which his whole life was bound up would be in ruins. He therefore bent his mighty energies to preserve what he had created, and started a new campaign against his enemies, but his nervous irritability, and his frequent threat of resignation were an index of the mental struggle he was undergoing. As the responsibility of the situation he had himself created weighed on his mind more and more, his apprehensions crystallized into a fear of ultramontaniam in the countries bordering on Germany—in Belgium, France and Italy, and to a lesser degree (now that Andrassy was at the head of affairs) in Austria. Only in England and Russia was this particular horizon clear—and even Russia was showing signs of a friendly feeling towards France. It was well known that the *Chargé d'Affaires* in St. Petersburg was not considered skilful enough to fill the place of Reuss, the absent Ambassador, adequately, and therefore von Radowitz, head of

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 824. No. 53. To Lord Derby. 3 February 1875.

the department for Eastern affairs, and the "ablest of Bismarck's diplomatic pupils," was to be sent to investigate the situation and bring matters round to their former condition.<sup>1</sup> On hearing of the mission, Lord Odo Russell remarked incidentally to Bülow that he was pleased to hear of it as the coquetting between Gorchakov and Le Flô and Decazes had for some time been watched in London with apprehension.<sup>2</sup>

After events enhanced the mystery and exaggerated the importance of the mission, but Lord Odo Russell's surmise has been largely corroborated by the publication of Radowitz's own papers,<sup>3</sup> and the sensational theory that he went offering a cut and dried suggestion that Russia should have a free hand in the East in return for a free hand for Germany against France, remains unproved.

While Radowitz was away, Bismarck pursued with great energy his vigorous policy against his ultramontane enemies abroad. He acted as though he had knowledge of an international plot fomented by the clericals in every country aimed at the destruction of Germany. He sent a dictatorial note to the Belgian Government demanding, in no diplomatic terms, immediate action against three bishops who had shown pity for the German victims of his church policy, and also against a German Duchesne, who had made an offer to a French Archbishop to murder him for money.<sup>4</sup> When Belgium protested she could do nothing, Bismarck replied: "It is the duty of Belgium, and doubly so as a neutral power, to follow the example of other states, and amend her laws so as to have the power of preventing Belgian subjects from disturbing the peace of friendly and neighbouring states." Such a communication was difficult to answer, and when a timid reply was made that Belgium thought her attitude was correct and compared favourably with that of Bavaria, for instance, Bismarck made the crushing rejoinder that "the governments he protected should be in unison of thought and language with the German Government,"<sup>5</sup> and

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* To Lord Derby. 3 February 1875.

<sup>2</sup>Pol. Arch. D.A.A. 6 February 1875. Note by Bülow.

<sup>3</sup>The question is fully discussed by Holborn. *Bismarck's Europäische Politik zu Beginn der siebenzigsten Jahre und die Mission Radowitz.*

<sup>4</sup>Duchesne does not seem to have been quite right in his head. According to the *Nord* he had made a similar offer to Bismarck "to kill, if he liked, the bishops, the archbishops and even the Pope himself." *D.D.F.* I. p.394.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 824. No. 67. To Lord Derby. 10 February 1875.

an official notification of the Belgian note was despatched to Paris. In Lord Odo Russell's eyes this was an ominous sign that Bismarck was resolved "to warn other governments of the dangers to which the language of the ultramontane clergy and press might expose them in relation with the German Government so long as the conflict with the Roman Church was necessary to the fulfilment of his national policy."<sup>1</sup>

All this time Bismarck was firing similar broadsides in Rome, where the Government had offended him by declaring their inability to modify their press laws at his behest. Bismarck connected this obstinacy with that of the bishops at home, which he could only account for by attributing it to foreign support, and he showed his displeasure by setting his face against a projected visit of the Emperor William to Italy.<sup>2</sup> But though he might woo Russia, bully Belgium and snub Italy, it was France that was never long out of his thoughts. In 1874 he had brooded over her rapid recovery, and it was just at the moment when he was so annoyed with Belgium and Italy that he heard from a secret source that France had placed an order for ten thousand horses without limitation of price, and at a high commission, in Germany. Acting as though the rumour were entirely reliable, he tried to allay his own alarm by a measure which aroused that of all Europe. An embargo was immediately placed on the export of all horses from Germany whatever.

Decazes looked upon the embargo as a direct challenge, and lost no time in so representing it to the other Powers, for the measure that seemed to Bismarck an elementary precaution in the circumstances was regarded by France as a wanton act of aggression.<sup>3</sup> For some obscure reason Bismarck now threatened to resign. The Empress had long opposed his church policy, and many people who had the ear of the Emperor mistrusted his latest move. The crisis lasted a week, and even when the resignation was withdrawn, nobody knew on what terms he had consented to remain in office.<sup>4</sup>

The French, exasperated at German policy towards them, and determined to show their independence, were passing a new

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 825. No. 106. Most Confidential. 5 March 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 92. Secret. 23 February 1875.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. I. p.247.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 825. No. 107. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 6 March 1875. (This is dated 6 February, obviously in error).

army bill through its final stages, and the feeling between the two countries was almost indescribable. The French papers represented the bill as a necessary measure of defence, and the German press responded in such a tone that to judge from journalism alone, a conflict between France and Germany would seem inevitable. The question of the embargo was thrashed out with insult and innuendo,<sup>1</sup> and when a Baden paper reported that two members of the French artillery committee had been making visits to arms factories in Switzerland and Vienna, the *Nord Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* published an article to prove that the visit was inspired by a desire to purchase arms so as to be ready for war in two years' time.<sup>2</sup> But Lord Odo Russell and Major-General Walker accepted all this hot air with a considerable amount of caution. The Military Attaché thought it was bluff intended partly to divert attention from the further repressive measures against the Ultramontanes, and partly to bring home the fact to Germans that the Fatherland was in danger, and so justify Bismarck's great preparations against the peril of the "united forces of the papacy and France."<sup>3</sup> When Lord Derby consulted Lord Odo Russell he replied that the peace did not seem to be immediately threatened, but admitted that anything might happen when Germany's new army organization was complete the following spring. He knew Bismarck wanted to complete German unity, but he would prefer to do it by peaceful means, and even if war were necessary, it was possible that Austria might be attacked "in self-defence rather than France."<sup>4</sup>

Two days later the *Times* alarmed Europe by publishing a disturbing article suggesting that Bismarck was seeking to influence the Italian Government against the Pope by requesting their intervention in the correspondence between His Holiness and foreign bishops,<sup>5</sup> but this report was flatly denied in Rome,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The French had already tried Hungary, but had found Hungarian horses too weak, but the "Hungarians declare that the French are such indifferent riders that they do not know what to do with Hungarian horses when they have them." *N.D.A.Z.* 11 March 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 825. Encl. to No. 124. Major-General Walker to Lord Odo Russell. 11 March 1875.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 130. To Lord Derby. 18 March 1875.

<sup>5</sup>*Times.* 20 March 1875.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 244. 287. No. 23. Sir A. Paget to Lord Derby. Confidential. 23 March 1875.

and Lord Odo Russell's inquiries in Berlin were met with the assertion that "no such communication had passed between the governments."<sup>1</sup> True though this may have been with regard to this particular rumour, there were so many alarming symptoms abroad that Lord Derby sought a confidential conversation with Count Münster. He said the serious fears that agitated Europe were not shared by Lord Odo Russell, but that he would welcome an authoritative statement on Münster's own part. The rumours were not to be attributed to the machinations of stock exchange speculators, but he had heard them accounted for by the prohibition of the export of horses and to the demands of the German Government on Belgium.

Count Münster assured Lord Derby that he could put entire trust in Lord Odo's assurances, and that no one wished for peace more than Bismarck. The last war had so secured Germany's frontiers and position that France had no need to fear an attack from Germany so long as she fulfilled her obligations as a neighbour, but so long as France dreamed of revenge so long must Germany be prepared to defend herself, and to this end the prohibition of the export of horses was a necessary measure. Germany could not denude herself of horses she might need in order that the French army might be reorganized.

Lord Derby said he had looked on the matter that way himself.

As far as the Belgian note was concerned, Münster laid the whole blame on the ultramontane party in Germany: it was utterly unscrupulous, and would willingly inflame revolution at home and war abroad; but it would not succeed in Germany because of the sound sense of the population, and the agitation abroad would lead to nothing because a blow against Germany was too dangerous a game to play. Lord Derby replied that he was glad Lord Odo Russell's views were confirmed. They were also his, and he would write in that sense to Lord Lyons, and added that Lord Odo Russell's recent despatch reporting a conversation with Bismarck had greatly pleased him. He asked Münster to thank the Chancellor, especially for his advice concerning Russian relations, and to assure him that no one laid greater weight on a good understanding between England and

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 144. To Lord Derby. 24 March 1875.



Germany than he did, for he considered it a security for lasting peace.<sup>1</sup>

Despite Lord Derby's belief that the rumours were due to German policy Bülow in his reply to Münster reiterated Bismarck's conviction that they were all to be traced to speculators.<sup>2</sup> But Decazes was still more apprehensive than Lord Derby and would not leave the subject alone, so that within a week Lord Odo Russell was again instructed to report on the situation. He was still more persuaded than before of Bismarck's peaceful intentions.

*To Lord Derby.* 28 March 1875<sup>3</sup>—

"... I cannot but think that the Duke's apprehensions rest on a misunderstanding of Prince Bismarck's policy. The war with France which Prince Bismarck required to bring about the establishment of the German Empire is an established fact, and need not be repeated, Germany having obtained all and ever so much more than she could reasonably expect from that war.

Prince Bismarck has nothing to gain from a second and aggressive war on France, which would certainly not have the support of public opinion because it could bring no further advantages to Germany. France is therefore safe if she will abstain 1st, from serious preparations for a war of revenge, and 2nd, from seeking anti-German alliances.

The prohibition to export horses from Germany, which the Duke Decazes looks upon as an alarming symptom is on the contrary intended by Prince Bismarck to act as a peace measure and to put off rather than hasten on an outbreak of hostilities. Prince Bismarck told me himself that he had proofs in hand of the secret orders given by the French Government to purchase 10,000 horses in Germany in the course of the present year, besides the annual supply already bought and paid for—so he

<sup>1</sup>Pol. Arch. D.A.A. London. Münster to Bismarck. Vertraulich. 22 March 1875. I cannot trace this despatch of Russell's which seems to be hinted at in Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 71. "... I may tell you confidentially that Bismarck has given us through Lord Odo Russell a serious warning against the unfriendly feelings of the Russian Government towards England. ..." But Bismarck's warnings seem to have been sincerely meant. "... Dass Lord Loftus für unser Bemühen, die Verstimmung zwischen Russland und England zu beseitigen, sich als unbrauchbar erweist, ist zu bedauern, hat aber der Herr Reichskanzler, dem diesen Diplomaten seit lange kennt, nicht überrascht. ..." Pol. Arch. D.A.A. Berlin. Bismarck to Reuss, 4 April 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* Bülow to Münster. 27 March 1875.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 151.

thought it as well to show the French Government at once that their game was found out.

The sole object, he said, of the measure was to throw difficulties in the way of their army organization and delay its completion and thereby put off as long as possible the war of revenge the French were so evidently preparing for.

The threatening representations made by the German ministers at Brussels to the Belgian Government respecting the language and conduct of the ultramontane party in that country and the communication of that threat to the Governments of France, Austria, Russia, the Netherlands etc. can scarcely be viewed in the light of a cause for alarm by the Powers of Europe now that events have proved Prince Bismarck to be without allies in his war against the Church of Rome.

His several appeals to the Catholic Powers for co-operation at the Pope's death have hitherto been met by evasive answers, and his representations sound to me more like expressions of alarm than threats. He assumes that the Church of Rome can injure united Germany, he calls upon her neighbours to assist in keeping down the clergy—he threatens governments with his displeasure, but his threats have hitherto produced no practical results. No government has yet agreed to adopt his anti-church policy, he is realizing that his struggle with the Papacy must be a single-handed one, and he is alarmed to find that other governments, blind to the danger of, or ill-disposed towards Germany, do not obey his call and follow his example of imprisoning bishops, banishing Jesuits and suppressing convents, because he does not see his way to compelling these governments to do so by force without incurring the disapprobation of Europe and perhaps of his own Sovereign.

He might, perhaps, by repeated threats, bring about the downfall of an ultramontane administration in Belgium, France or Italy, but then his relations with the incoming ministry would probably for the time being become more intimate and more friendly.

If things came to the worst, he could certainly break off diplomatic relations with a state whose clergy offended him, but I cannot, for my part, conceive an armed invasion of Belgium, France or Italy for the suppression of the Roman Catholic Church.

Prince Bismarck might then find it troublesome enough to resist the clerical Catholic and Protestant Conservative and extreme radical elements which would combine in Germany against him and his party.

Happily for Prince Bismarck, there is no danger of the Catholic Powers ever giving their moral support to an infallible papacy. . . ."

Trusting Count Münster and his own Ambassador rather than the temperamental Decazes, Lord Derby decided not to treat the Belgian note as of international significance, but instructed Lord Odo Russell to do his utmost to allay any irritation against Belgium on the part of Bismarck, but Russell failed to find any such "irritation" and wrote that Münster would be in a position "to represent the matter in its true light, and close the incident for the present."<sup>1</sup> It was probably this calm and soothing despatch which led Derby to refuse to read the German note to Belgium and its reply, when questioned in the Lords.<sup>2</sup>

While things were calming down in Belgium, they were growing more strained on the other side of the Alps. The Emperor had intended to visit Rome in the spring, and now an already jumpy Europe heard that he was to stay at home and that the Crown Prince was to go instead. The responsibility for this alteration lay at Bismarck's door,<sup>3</sup> and though his motive remained obscure, his action was none the less alarming, and perhaps it is more than mere coincidence that Münster's instructions drew his serious attention to the dangers of the situation created by the new French army law, and requested him, if a suitable opportunity presented itself, to suggest that representations to Paris might have a beneficial effect.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 156. To Lord Derby. 5 April 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.397.

<sup>3</sup>"... There can be no doubt that the Emperor was anxious and well enough to go to Italy, that every preparation (even to ordering four new uniforms) was made for the journey, and that H.M.'s doctor expected good results from change of air to a warmer climate. The written medical opinion which compelled the Emperor to give up the journey was unexpected, and I happen to know that Prince Bismarck caused certain non-solicited favours to be granted to the Emperor's doctor, for which the doctor called to thank the Chancellor a few days before his medical opinion in writing was asked for.

The Emperor himself told me at Prince Hatzfeldt's ball where H.M. remained till two in the morning, that he felt well enough to go and regretted the doctor's decision, because he much wished to see Italy again, and return the King's visit. . . ." F.O. 64. 826. No. 166. To Lord Derby. Secret. 15 April 1875. Cf. *D.D.F.* I. pp.395-6.

<sup>4</sup>*G.P.* I. p.249.

While these diplomatic manœuvres were going on behind the stage, the journalists threw themselves into the limelight and succeeded in thoroughly frightening everybody. The *National Zeitung* started the chorus with an article on 31 March asserting that the formation of the fourth battalion was *ad hoc* a direct challenge to Germany. This was followed on 5 April by a disturbing suggestion from Herr Aegidi, chief of the Press Bureau for Foreign Affairs in Berlin, that Germany was menaced by the new French army law, by the preparations for a clerical monarchical restoration and attempts to create a quadruple alliance between France, Austria, the Quirinal and the Vatican aimed against Germany. Before Europe had time to recover from this shock the *Post* of 8 April asked the question openly that everyone had in mind—"Is war in sight?" The *Nord Deutsche* and the *Preussische Jahrbucher* took upon themselves to reply. The attitude of Austria and Italy caused no suspicion, but the same could not be said of France, said the former, and the latter stated point blank that the question at issue must be settled by arms.

The effect of these articles was startling and immediate. In England they were universally condemned, in France they caused frenzied consternation, in Italy and Austria incredulous surprise. In Bavaria the liberal party leader Herr Marquardsen expressed in the strongest terms "his anger at the sword-rattling of the Berlin press . . . and condemned the policy of internationalizing the church conflict."<sup>1</sup> He felt so strongly about it that he announced his intention of demanding an interview with Bismarck, whom he considered responsible. Even more significant, in view of his former faith in peace, was their effect on Lord Odo Russell. He was far too well informed not to be aware that articles coming from the press bureau were officially inspired, and he expressed his revulsion of feeling forcibly and clearly to Lord Derby, though even now he was reluctant to believe that war was seriously contemplated,<sup>2</sup> and as soon as the press alarm showed signs of calming down under the influence of Bismarck's disavowal of

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 244. 287. No. 30. Munich. Morier to Lord Derby. 21 April 1875. Most Confidential.

<sup>2</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 72. It is unfortunate that this letter should have been printed as if it were written before the war scare article appeared. As it was written immediately under the influence of these filibustering articles, it is understandable enough, but nevertheless, Lord Odo Russell up to this time, had consistently refused to believe in immediate war.

warlike intentions in the official *Correspondance de Berlin* of 14 April, he once more reviewed the position in the light of recent events. Although the people wanted peace, and the army was not eager for war, the semi-official press had created a feeling that French and ultramontane intrigues would end in such a dangerous situation that one more struggle would be necessary before Germany could "settle down to the undisputed enjoyment of her unity and independence" . . . and that this impression was to be maintained by even more energetic measures of defence. Moltke was said to believe that the French would be ready in 1877, and that Germany would be invaded through Belgium.<sup>1</sup> Bülow told Lord Odo that the German military authorities were convinced that the French army law meant that a war of revenge was being actively prepared, that Italian sympathies were more French than German, for clerical influence was increasing in both countries. War was not immediately threatened, he said, and Bismarck placed great hopes on England's peaceful influence before France was actually ready.

Lord Odo Russell then reported the interview between the Emperor and Polignac as a further example of his desire to end his days in peace. The Emperor, he said, was "sincerely annoyed by the sensational tone of the press, the almost entire management of which he does not suspect to be in the hands of his Chancellor." He thought the press would now be instructed to adopt a more conciliatory tone.<sup>2</sup> This tone was reflected in the German reply to the Belgian note, which had been left unanswered since 26 February. Regretting that Belgium could not see her way to amending her criminal law, and sympathizing with her difficulties, Bismarck hoped she would appreciate that this was an unsatisfactory state of affairs, and that she would eventually be able to rectify it. He pointed out that states were now linked together in a very delicate manner, and it was necessary that one country should not menace another by the activities of its subjects, particularly in the case of states of guaranteed neutrality.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 175. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 19 April 1875. " . . . Someone having observed to him that the French must go mad before they can think of attacking Germany again, Count Moltke replied: "True, but who can guarantee that the French will not go mad?" "

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 175. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 19 April 1875.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 173. Enclosure. 18 April 1875.

Although it could not have been known in Berlin, there were further tranquillizing forces at work during these days. On the 15 April the Russian Emperor had assured Le Flô that France would not have to depend on herself alone if Germany renewed the war,<sup>1</sup> and it was on this very day that Bülow declared himself perfectly satisfied with Gontaut-Biron's assurances with regard to the peaceful intentions of France. He added that the Belgian question was now considered closed with the reply that had just been sent. Any demands in it were meant merely in an academic sense.<sup>2</sup>

This week seems to have been the turning point in the obscure history of the scare. Up to this time, with the exception already noted, Lord Odo Russell does not appear to have ever been seriously alarmed, but important events were to take place at a dinner given by him at the Embassy on 21 April.

## II

It was at this dinner that Gontaut-Biron, just returned from France, had a momentous conversation with von Radowitz, which was destined to revive the flames of fear and to throw France into new frenzies.<sup>3</sup> According to the French Ambassador's account, Radowitz declared that if the French had any ulterior motive of revenge, it was Germany's duty to crush her before she was strong enough to carry out her designs.<sup>4</sup>

Great controversy has arisen over these words. Radowitz omitted them in the official report he made of this conversation and the editors of *die grosse Politik* have suggested that they were merely incidental remarks and that his hearer failed to discriminate between the *obita dicta* of Radowitz and his official communi-

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* I. pp.403-404. See also *Le Figaro*. 21 May and 2 June 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.409.

<sup>3</sup>Blowitz's story of a conversation with Decazes based on Gontaut-Biron's despatch (*Memoirs* p.106) recording the events of this dinner cannot be accurate. He puts the conversation on the 15th. Gontaut-Biron's despatch was not written till the 21st.

<sup>4</sup>*D.D.F.* I. pp.417-418. Bismarck had certainly used similar language to Lord Odo Russell on a previous occasion.

cations, but Gontaut-Biron himself always maintained that they were uttered, and uttered officially. Lord Odo Russell's despatches prove that it is most unlikely he was mistaken, for a week later Karolyi was listening to very similar sentiments from Bismarck.

*To Lord Derby.* 27 April 1875.<sup>1</sup>—

“ . . . My Austrian colleague, Count Karolyi, called to-day, and confided to me the substance of a conversation he had yesterday with Prince Bismarck at the F.O. as follows—The Prince, he said, began by telling him that he was not—on his honour—responsible for the articles in the press, especially the *Post*, which spoke with suspicion of the intentions and sympathies of Austria. He looked upon Austria as Germany's best friend and ally, but what the papers said about French armaments was true—the creation of the fourth battalion would give France 270 more battalions than before the late war, and a so-called peace establishment which could only be intended to enable the French army to take the field at any given moment without calling in the reserves.

Prince Bismarck went on to explain in detail the various reasons which convinced him that France intended to attack Germany but he admitted that the military authorities did not expect the French army would be ready for war before the year 1877.

If the French, Prince Bismarck said, continued their preparations on the present scale, and that their intentions of attacking Germany admitted of no further doubt, it would be manifestly the duty of the German Government to take the initiative so as to put a stop to war by energetic measures.

Communications on this subject, Prince Bismarck said, had been made to the Austrian Government by his orders through General Schweinitz—one fact only he had hitherto not mentioned, but would tell it in strict confidence to Count Karolyi; it was that the French Government were having paper money made in England in small notes, evidently for the payment of the army, of which a sum amounting to one milliard, two hundred thousand francs had already been sent on to France.

Prince Bismarck then spoke of Italy and Belgium and complained of the clerical sympathies of their governments which only encouraged the ultramontane party to conspire further against the states of Europe, and he wound up by the warmest

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 183.

declarations of his anxious desire for the maintenance of peace all over the world.

Count Karolyi appeared well pleased with the general tone of Prince Bismarck's conversation, from which he concluded that the Prince's object is to prevent war by a timely warning to France through other governments of the danger it incurs by exaggerated armaments and anti-German conspiracies with the ultramontane party in Europe.

On the other hand, Prince Karolyi fears that if France carries out her armaments as at present proposed, Prince Bismarck will act on his threat of anticipating an attack on the part of France, before she is ready in 1877, that is next year, but he does not expect the peace of Europe will be disturbed before then—and not even then if France will take Prince Bismarck's warnings to heart."

Bismarck's words on the duty of preventive war leave the Radowitz apologists without any firm ground and dispose once for all of all the casuistical explanations that have since seen the light—at this moment there is no doubt that Bismarck was trying to accustom Europe to the idea of war. His absurd assumption that France was having small money printed as wages for troops was investigated. The explanation was simple. Such money had indeed been printed ever since 1871, but its object was to prevent shortage owing to the payment of the indemnity rather than to facilitate the declaration of a new war.

Lord Odo Russell still found it difficult to believe in the scare, but he had to admit that the position was very tense.

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 27 April 1875.<sup>1</sup>—

"... While the officious press continues to familiarize the public with the idea that another war to save Germany from her enemies will be sooner or later unavoidable, the language of the German Government is pacific and reassuring as to the present and the hope is entertained as to the future, that the warning given by the press of Berlin will be sufficient to convince the French Government that they had better desist from organizing their army in a manner that must be looked upon as a threat to Germany.

Field Marshal Count Moltke is said to be of opinion that if the French Government persist in their present system of arma-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 184.



ment, they should be summoned to disarm by Germany. The sooner this is done, he says, the more lives will be saved. To wait until France is ready may cost Germany one hundred thousand men more than if they fought before the French are ready, and he thinks that the great Powers of Europe should, in the interests of peace, advise France to desist from her armaments, before Germany is compelled to do so alone.

Great hopes are founded on the approaching visit of the Emperor of Russia and of Prince Gorchakov, whose influence will be exerted, it is believed, to remove the alarm which French armaments and papal encyclicals produce at Berlin.

I note a general impression that peace will be preserved during the present year."

The actual situation at this moment was so tense that the rumour that the Emperor Alexander was about to send the Russian military attaché to Germany to express privately and independently of the normal diplomatic channels the sincere hope that peace might be preserved was received with relief by the whole diplomatic body, and the seriousness of the crisis was further emphasized by the news that Bismarck had postponed his visit to Varzin so as to meet Count Shuvalov who was expected on 2 May, and that he would stay also until the visit of the Tsar and Prince Gorchakov in order to discuss affairs with them.<sup>1</sup> A sombre view was taken by the British military attaché. He wrote to Lord Odo: "Although I am still of opinion that there was until very recently no intention of provoking a renewal of the conflict before the spring of 1876, by which date all the German preparations would have been completed by the provision of the new field guns and infantry small arms, the events of the last three weeks have made me fully alive to the fact that the preservation of peace is extremely doubtful, and that it really depends on the will of one man."<sup>2</sup> This report from so reliable and well-informed a witness as Major-General Walker was disturbing enough, but Lord Odo Russell had still further cause for uneasiness on this particular day. The Belgian Ambassador, grave and anxious, called at the Embassy to tell

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 826. No. 181. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 26 April 1875. Wertheimer: *Andrassy II.* 235.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 827. Walker's Despatch. No. 33. 1 May 1875. In this despatch he had analysed the effective strength of the German army.

him in strict confidence that he had just received a message from Bismarck through Bülow warning him that Belgium might have to protect her neutrality sooner than he thought.

They talked the matter over together. Nothomb's fear was that Bismarck, following the example of Frederick the Great in Saxony, would occupy Belgium if he thought France likely to attack Germany by this route, but he did not accuse Germany of hostile intent towards Belgium, and thought the occupation would be merely strategical. Russell, for his part, refused to believe that any such occupation was intended.<sup>1</sup> But the next day the Belgian Ambassador's fears were corroborated by Moltke himself, who paid Lord Odo Russell a visit.<sup>2</sup> One engrossing subject was uppermost in the mind of both, but at first the conversation turned on indifferent topics.

*To Lord Derby.* Most Confidential. 2 May 1875.<sup>3</sup>—

"... I thought it best to begin by discussing indifferent subjects, and let him, if so inclined, initiate a conversation on the topic of the day—the journey of the Crown Prince and Princess in Italy led to art, and then the Field Marshal observed that art and industry would suffer much from the coming war.

I said I could not believe in it, because I saw neither cause nor necessity for war.

General Moltke replied that no one hated war more sincerely than himself—but France would force it on by her armaments.

I said that the French Government denied that the reorganization of their army implied an intention to break the peace of Europe.

General Moltke replied that he was too well-informed and too well-versed in military matters to admit or believe in the sincerity of their peaceful assurances—and he then entered into the arguments . . . on which the apprehensions of the German Government are founded—namely, the formation of the fourth battalions and the extent and expense of the peace establishment, which, to a soldier's mind, implied the intention to make war.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 191. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 1 May 1875.

<sup>2</sup>This must be the conversation to which Münster referred on 7 June 1875, "Einen Augenblick hat auch, namentlich nach einer Konversation mit Moltke, Lord Odo Russell ernstliche Befürchtungen gehegt." *G.P. I.* p.290.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 192.

He could not but admire and envy the patriotism of the French Parliament ever ready to vote without hesitation the demands of their war department, whilst the German Parliament, with all its evil democratic elements endeavoured to resist and refuse the most necessary expenses for the German army.

Perhaps, I observed, the German Parliament wished for peace, and thought their peace establishment sufficient? No doubt, the General explained, Germany wished for peace, and had no need for conquest or aggression, but Germany required more than any other nation an army organized for defence because she was placed in the centre of Europe, and could be invaded from all sides, whilst the other surrounding Powers had but one or two vulnerable points to defend. Parliament should not forget the teaching of history but remember that from her geographical position Germany must ever be ready to anticipate hostile intentions and alliances on the part of her neighbours.

I said that none of her neighbours had the remotest wish to invade Germany, and that if ever France received sufficient strength to attempt it, she would find no allies to assist her in breaking the peace of Europe by being the first to take the field again.

General Moltke said that he could not admit that peace was broken by the Power that marched first, it was the Power that provoked the necessity of defence in others which must be held responsible for war.

That sounded much, I said, like going to war to prevent it—but could not diplomacy first be allowed to try her skill at keeping peace between France and Germany, and had he no course to suggest which might postpone, if not arrest, the necessity he deplored of an appeal to arms?

Moltke replied that as far as Germany was concerned it rested with the great Powers to postpone or arrest war for ever, by openly siding with her against France and showing France the futility of her projected vengeance; England especially, he said, has more influence in France than any other Power, and might therefore render the greatest services towards the cause of peace—but he had little hope himself from the action of foreign diplomacy—because Germany, for reasons he could not account for, since the foundation of the Empire, appeared to inspire hatred and suspicion, rather than confidence to her former friends and allies. I said that Germany was hated by no one—but that the sensational tone of her officious press was calculated to awaken suspicion as to the pacific intentions of the government.

General Moltke did not reply to my remark, but said that no government could possibly doubt Germany's anxious, honest and ardent desire for peace however much they might dislike her, and if they did not find means of persuading France to desist from her intended vengeance and that unhappily Germany met with defeat, and was unable to impose peace on Europe at once, Europe would be plunged into another 'Thirty Years' War.

I said that I was surprised to hear him talk of the possibility of defeat, when it was certain that Germany was better prepared than ever—far better than in 1870—far better than any continental power, besides which she had since the last war secured the alliance of Austria?

General Moltke replied that success in battle could not be reckoned on with certainty, and that Austria might, notwithstanding the alliance, become a source of embarrassment to Germany.

I asked him how?

After some hesitation he replied that the German Government might be placed in a very awkward position by the growing desire of the German subjects of Austria to shake off the rule of the Magyar and the Slav and become subjects of the German Empire.

I replied that that complication appeared to me remote since they were mostly Roman Catholics.

General Moltke admitted the complication he foresaw to be remote if the statesman who governed Austria adhered closely to the present alliance with Germany.

I said that England would be ever ready to exert her influence in the interest of peace, and that I most sincerely hoped he would tell me privately how that influence in his opinion could be best turned to account to prevent the dangers he foresaw in Europe.

General Moltke said he hoped much from England, because England and Germany united could secure the peace of the world.

I have given Your Lordship the chief points of our conversation which was long, and carried on all the time in a very friendly tone."

It is not too much to infer from this conversation that the military party in Berlin were committed to the belief that a preventive war with France was preferable to waiting until she

had sufficiently recovered her strength to make her a dangerous foe once more, and two days later Bismarck's mind was still further unfolded in a conversation between Bülow and Russell. The situation in Belgium and Italy both came under review. Bülow emphasized the fact that German policy was animated by fear of ultramontane plots which struck at the very heart of the Empire, and the warning which had been recently addressed to Belgium was only a proof of Germany's desire to see her free and independent. If only an anti-clerical ministry could replace the pro-French, ultramontane one, the prospects of peace would be brighter. Germany could not interfere with the Government of Belgium but could at least "raise a warning voice and open the eyes of Belgium to coming dangers; it was for the people of Belgium to do the rest, and look to their own safety. . . ." When Russell objected that these very warnings, reiterated by the press, created a state of friction which was extremely dangerous, Bülow disclaimed responsibility for its language, but declared emphatically that it had placed its finger on a real peril in French armaments. Steps, however, were being taken to calm it down, and as the rumours were dying away he hoped that France would not break the peace after all.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day he spoke of the Italian situation. The Italian Government was weak in its dealings with the Church. Germany would not interfere, but did well to remind Italy that a strengthening of the Papal Guarantee Laws was an international necessity. Asked to be a little more definite about the weakness of the Italian Government, he replied that he had heard from secret sources of a papal intrigue—inspired by Jesuits—to establish a firmer protectorate over the Italian Government in return for the acceptance of the loss of the temporal power. Attempts had been made to involve Austria, happily without success. But meanwhile the relations between the Italian and German Governments were cordial and he still hoped they might co-operate against the ultramontane danger.<sup>2</sup> And then the conversation closed.

In tracing the original source of the war scare, these assertions of Bülow's are of the greatest significance. He evidently believed that the German Government was in possession of information

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 193. To Lord Derby. Secret. 4 May 1875.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 194. To Lord Derby. Secret. 4 May 1875.

which, if trustworthy, could only mean that in Belgium and Italy no less than in France, there was a definite Jesuit plot against the German Empire. Everything hangs on the truth or falsity of this information. So far as Belgium was concerned, Mr. Lumley assured Lord Derby that the idea was ridiculous, and the complexion of the government was so far from being ultramontane that he could not imagine that any responsible agent could have made such reports to his Government.<sup>1</sup>

The question must be faced, were Bismarck and Bülow inventing the whole thing? Responsible statesmen are hardly to be suspected of stooping so low, but as it is equally impossible to accept their assertions as founded in fact, an explanation has to be found. One explanation seems to cover the facts. It was part of Bismarck's considered policy to make extensive use of secret service agents (they had already done him good service in the case of Arnim) and at this time their reports appear to have been particularly sensational, and it is difficult to resist the conclusion that they were not distorted and inaccurate as well.<sup>2</sup> The two German statesmen at this time frequently refer to "secret sources" for their most sensational information, and if Bismarck, nerve-wracked as he is known to have been at this juncture, was receiving and crediting such reports, two important mysteries—his bullying attitude and apparent eagerness for war—are in sight of being cleared up. If this theory is correct, it is a significant indictment of the spy system: those who employ it may become its chief victims.

Bülow's instructions to Hohenlohe confirm the suggestion that Bismarck was acting in good faith but ill-balanced judgment. Germany, Hohenlohe was informed, was not convinced of the harmlessness of the French war measures. The peaceful assurances of Decazes were inconsistent with the recent financial

<sup>1</sup>"... That these German Jesuits meet with the French clergy in Belgium in favour of the annexation of this country to France (is) an accusation which, if made publicly here, would be received from one end of the country to the other with a shout of indignant derision. . . ." F.O. 244. 287. No. 126. Secret. Brussels. Mr. Lumley to Lord Derby. 15 May 1875.

<sup>2</sup>Some of these "secret reports" have already been noticed: the purchase of horses, the visits to munition centres, the abnormal printing of small notes etc. A further example is given in Weymss: *Morier* II. 353. Germany had "positive evidence that the *Times* had been bribed by a large sum to admit French correspondents' letters dictated by the Duc Decazes for speculative purposes." The number and sensational character of these reports at this time is quite extraordinary, and must in themselves have contributed very largely to the state of tension in Europe.

transactions of the French Government, for the hoarding of so enormous a sum as 600,000,000 Fr. in 20 Fr. notes in the Bank of France, could not but create misgivings that it was being saved for a certain purpose.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck could think of one purpose only, and Hohenlohe thought it well to put off his departure for leave so as to discuss the matter with Decazes. The Minister explained. The bank was obliged to make good withdrawn notes by others in order to maintain the balance, and could not allow either an increase or decrease of bank-notes to take place beyond a variation of the legally settled figure. It had about three milliards of bank-notes, of which some were in circulation, and others had been withdrawn in order to be replaced by new ones which the Bank had stored in their vaults.<sup>2</sup> The explanation sounded simple and feasible, but both statesmen were too well-informed not to realize the delicacy of the situation, and they discussed in the friendliest way the best means of calming public opinion. They spoke of Spanish, Belgian and Italian affairs, and the German Ambassador left with the impression that whilst he had made it clear that Germany regarded herself as ultimately threatened by France's military and financial measures, it would be in her own interests to find some means of common action with Germany, first for the sake of peace, and secondly for the sake of the position she desired to take among the great Powers.<sup>3</sup> Decazes thought that Hohenlohe had received orders not to let him imagine that the emotion caused by the army law had died down, but that he was to avoid disturbing him, and that he was not to hint at the intentions of Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Meantime Lord Derby had digested Lord Odo Russell's accounts of his recent conversations with Moltke and Bülow, and asked the French Ambassador to inform his Government that Russell did not believe France to be in immediate danger, and hinted that Austria perhaps had more to fear at the moment. He gave his promise that France would meet with every support from England in the event of an unprovoked attack, and said he believed the Tsar also would use his influence in favour of peace.<sup>5</sup> In St. Petersburg Le Flô had laid before Gorchakov for presenta-

<sup>1</sup>*G.P. I.* p.269.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* I. p.270.

<sup>3</sup>*G.P. I.* p.270.

<sup>4</sup>*D.D.F. I.* p.436.

<sup>5</sup>*D.D.F. I.* p.437.

tion to the Emperor, Gontaut-Biron's famous despatch of 21 April. The result must have exceeded his most sanguine expectations. The Emperor treated him with more than his usual cordiality, praised the calmness and wisdom of the French replies to the strange theories of Radowitz and promised he would not forget what had been shown him.<sup>1</sup>

It was on this very day, while Le Flô was working on the feelings of the Tsar, and while the Emperor William was expressing in a marginal note on the *Kölnische Zeitung* his peaceful sentiments and the German Government's entire lack of authority over such papers as the *Post* and the *Kölnische Zeitung*, Blowitz's famous article *A French Scare* appeared in the *Times*.<sup>2</sup> Contrasting the peaceful assurances of the press during the past few days with the feeling of apprehension that seemed to exist in all classes of society, the writer hinted that peace or war depended upon the interview shortly to take place between the Emperors of Russia and Germany. He recapitulated the arguments that France had not been sufficiently crushed, that Germany's note to Belgium had shown how little she had to hope from any other Power and that the military party was prepared to force the Emperor's hand to put France out of the way now rather than wait until she was strong enough to defend herself. France obviously wanted peace, and it was Germany's duty once for all to kill the alarming panic which disturbed the whole world, by openly disavowing the theories that were attributed to her, for it was not France alone that was affected, but every great Power in Europe.<sup>3</sup> The leading article, while professing a certain scepticism, admitted that there was a spectre which needed laying.

"... We could not do a better service to the cause of international peace than by thus stating in all the crudity of their extravagance

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* I. pp.437-440.

<sup>2</sup>Quite a literature has sprung up about this article, which has sometimes been given undue prominence in the history of the scare, but it is not necessary here to discuss this literature. See Blowitz: *Memoirs* Ch. V., *Times* 7 September 1878, *Le Figaro* 21 May and 2 June 1887.

<sup>3</sup>"... Like the old peasant woman, who, leaving her children alone at the farm, said to them: 'If anything happens to you, do not cry "Thieves" Nobody would come to you, for you alone would be robbed. Cry "Fire!" if you want to rouse the neighbours, for the whole village might be burnt. . . .'" *Times*, 6 May 1875.



the fears of these Parisian politicians. . . . If the French army were thoroughly reorganized, if some party believed its last hope to lie in a victorious campaign on the Rhine, if Germany were to lose so much of her discretion as to choose such a moment for an attack on another neighbour, and if then allies were thrown to the side of France, then no doubt the prospects of Europe would be dark indeed. . . . It is the business of statesmanship to prevent the accumulation of critical dangers. . . ."

This same eventful day saw Count Shuvalov in Berlin, on his way from St. Petersburg to London. He did not find Bismarck in any aggressive frame of mind, but on the contrary, full of apprehensions for the future. When the Russian Ambassador remarked that there seemed to be suspicions in some Berlin circles with regard to Russia, Bismarck became very much agitated. He begged Shuvalov not to say such things—he relied absolutely on Russia's friendship and had quite sufficient sleepless nights owing to his bad health without that.<sup>1</sup>

On 8 May Shuvalov reached London.

### III

The British Government were not to be alarmed by the cry of robbers, but they began to feel afraid that perhaps fire might be kindling. Even Lord Derby began to detect a faint smell of smoke, and as Disraeli was rather more suspicious than he, their thoughts turned to the possibilities of action. The Queen wanted to write to the Tsar, and hinted that Lord Cowley might profitably be sent on a special visit to Berlin, but Disraeli considered Lord Odo quite capable of dealing with the situation, and favoured some kind of joint action to secure peace.<sup>2</sup> Derby then sent a telegram to Russell, instructing him to use every possible means to allay the misunderstandings which had arisen between France and Germany, and to support the anticipated efforts of the Tsar in the same direction. He was also informed that Lord Derby intended to request the Italian and Austrian Governments to instruct their representatives in a similar manner.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Wertheimer: *Andrassy* II. 235.

<sup>2</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* V. 422.

<sup>3</sup>To Lord Odo Russell. 8 May 1875. *G.P.* I. p.272. Derby's instructions are printed in full in Japikse: *Europa und Bismarcks Friedenspolitik*. 197.

Lord Odo Russell did not lose a minute. He could not see Bismarck, but delivered Lord Derby's message to Bülow, telling him that fears were entertained that peace was threatened owing to German alarm at the rapid growth of French armaments, but that Great Britain was satisfied that France had no aggressive designs, and that H.M.G. would be happy to do all in their power to dispel misunderstandings. Bülow promised to communicate this message immediately to Bismarck, and in the meantime assured Russell that the Chancellor would appreciate the "friendly spirit and confidence thus manifested by H.M.G."<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck invited Lord Odo Russell to dine with him the next day for the express purpose of discussing the European situation. This was the day that the Tsar and Gorchakov had arrived in Berlin, and Bismarck had already had an interview with the Russian Minister in the morning.

*To Lord Derby.* 10 May 1875.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Prince Bismarck requested me to thank Your Lordship for the very friendly offer of assisting to dispel the unfounded apprehension which prevails of a disturbance of the peace of Europe—an offer which he highly appreciated as a proof of good-will and confidence on the part of H.M.G. but which had also somewhat surprised him because he thought it was well known to H.M.G. that all his efforts tended to the maintenance of peace and that the German Government was on friendly terms with that of France. The apprehensions in question had been propagated by the press, and perhaps by an association of stock jobbers, who, for purposes of their own, were turning to account an impression produced on the minds of the military authorities in Europe by the rapidity and the dimensions of the new army organizations in France—that military men should discuss the advantages of anticipating a suspected attack was part of their profession, but he did not subscribe to that '*up and at them*' principle and so long as the defence of Germany against her enemies was entrusted to his care, his motto would ever remain, '*Let them come on.*'

He did not of course question the right of any government to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 201. To Lord Derby. 9 May 1875. G.P. I. p.272. Bülow's account omits all mention of any appreciation of the attitude of H.M.G.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 204.

make what armaments it pleased—but such armaments were open to public comment and conjecture according to their nature and extent.

As a proof, however, of the friendly relations now subsisting between the German and French Governments he would tell me that the negotiation of a treaty or convention was under discussion between them which should tend to remove any apprehensions of the existence of a misunderstanding in the public mind.

In regard to Belgium he could only repeat that he was animated by the most friendly spirit for her welfare, for her liberties and for her independence, and he deeply regretted that his feelings and his policy were neither appreciated nor understood by the present Belgian Government.

On the other hand he was gratified to see by the debates in our Parliament how thoroughly well they had been appreciated and interpreted by H.M.G.

To sum up the case before the public there literally was in his opinion as a statesman no cause for war or even for the apprehension of war, so far as Germany was concerned, and he desired and intended the maintenance of peace as much as H.M.G. . . .”

After dinner Gorchakov came in in high spirits. He was greatly pleased at what had happened in the morning, and showed his satisfaction all too clearly. A telegram just received from Shuvalov had informed him of Derby's co-operation, and now Bismarck himself was ranged among the peacemakers. “I said,” wrote Lord Odo, “that under the circumstances I could not do better than hasten to telegraph this happy result to Your Lordship.”<sup>1</sup>

Satisfied as Gorchakov might be, this day had probably been one of the bitterest of Bismarck's whole life. In a secret despatch Lord Odo Russell informed Lord Derby of the extreme irritation with which Bismarck had spoken of Gorchakov's attempt to play the part of peacemaker, and to pose as the protector of France and mentor of Germany. In his vanity and desire to appear as still playing an important part in affairs, this conceited octogenarian had even asked for a categorical promise that he would never go to war—a promise he had refused to

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

give because it would imply the existence of an intention on his part he did not in any way entertain, and it was irritating to be asked to promise not to do a thing one never intended to do.

Later on still Gorchakov called on Lord Odo Russell. He came to suggest that Bismarck's assurances were so complete that they might very well let the whole matter drop. It was wise not to be unnecessarily irritating now that their object, the maintenance of peace, was assured. He had already advised the French Ambassador to adopt this attitude, and had requested him to ask his Government not to exhibit too much joy, as he did not wish Bismarck to feel Gorchakov's triumph too publicly. His version of the "Promise" story was that Bismarck had only refused to give it in writing, and he had declared that his word was sufficient.<sup>1</sup>

The events above narrated are given as recorded in Lord Odo Russell's strictly contemporary despatches, but there are in existence other more highly coloured accounts. Russell's letters seem to me more worthy of belief than Saburov's story,<sup>2</sup> which bears a resemblance too strong to be entirely accidental to the sensational journalism of Blowitz.<sup>3</sup> The British Ambassador stated explicitly that an interview had taken place between Gorchakov and Bismarck in the morning, and that Gorchakov came in after dinner, and this is difficult to reconcile with Saburov's statement that Lord Odo Russell told him "he had received an order to take part in the interview that Prince Gorchakov proposed to have with the German Chancellor, though convinced of the uselessness of a step which would probably irritate Prince Bismarck," and that he purposely arrived a quarter of an hour after the Russian statesman.<sup>4</sup> It is possible that he may have been present at the morning interview, as an account given by

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 205. To Lord Derby. Secret. 11 May 1875.

<sup>2</sup>Simpson: *The Saburov Memoirs*.

<sup>3</sup>Blowitz represents his *Times* article as inspired by the Radowitz interview. Saburov says that Russell's instructions reported that the F.O. was disturbed by a conversation between Radowitz and Gontaut-Biron. Blowitz always maintained that Bismarck approved of his article because he did not want his hand forced by the military party. Saburov says: "It was not against France but against the militants of the two countries that he bore a grudge. . . ." p.38.

<sup>4</sup>Professor Fuller, following Wertheimer (II. 236) gives yet a third version. He says that after Lord Odo Russell had had his interview he met Gorchakov in the anteroom and was brought back by him to be present at the conversation.

his brother seems to imply. In a conversation at Potsdam a year later, Lord Odo said that he was present at an interview between Bismarck and Gorchakov, and that he supported the Russian Chancellor. This could not have been the after-dinner interview unless it is assumed that nothing had been settled in the morning, for Gorchakov told Bismarck that Russia did not want France weakened any further. Lord Odo Russell said that while Bismarck was almost beside himself with nervous irritability, Gorchakov bantered him and told him not to be excited.<sup>1</sup>

It would be unprofitable to try and reconcile all these stories, and the whole point is a minor one, perhaps, except for one consideration. The contemporary account shows Lord Derby's instructions carried out in the friendly spirit in which they were framed, later the whole incident became embedded in a hornet's nest of suspicion and ill-feeling which seems to have been created after this particular day. When Lord Derby decided to ask the different Powers to support the Russian representations he could not have divined that Gorchakov would make them in such a way as to wound a much less susceptible nature than Bismarck's. But as it turned out, the Chancellor was caused the maximum of humiliation. Lord Odo Russell, who had never been seriously taken in by the agitation, was disturbed at hearing that the Queen thought of writing to the Emperor Alexander, and he hastened to telegraph as early as 8 o'clock in the morning to say that the only effect of such an action would be to cause pain to the Emperor William, who was entirely in favour of peace.<sup>2</sup> The letter, unfortunately, had already been despatched, and what at first had seemed merely a friendly representation by the British Government, now began to assume a sinister aspect in Bismarck's eyes. It became known to him also that Lord Derby had sent a request to Italy and Austria to support the Russian representations—an action he professed not to understand and found it difficult to forgive.

Italy supported Russia, but Austria, under the clever guidance of Andrassy, stood by Bismarck. When Sir A. Buchanan con-

<sup>1</sup>Grant Duff: *Notes from a Diary*, 1886-88. pp.128-9. See also Wertheimer: *Andrassy II.* 236. Plehn points out that Wertheimer's account, based on Karolyi's despatch, is not quite accurate, but does not seem to know that Russell's message was first delivered to Bülow and not to Bismarck.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 207. To Lord Derby. 11 May 1875.

veyed his instructions, he was told that only three days before satisfactory assurances had been received from Bismarck, and that in view of this it would seem an affront to appear to doubt his word. Andrassy was convinced that Germany was unlikely to fight France without a legitimate pretext or confidence in the neutrality of Russia. Neither the Emperor nor the South Germans wanted war. He acknowledged that the attitude of the press was alarming, and that this alarm "was increased by daily evidence of the nervous restlessness of Prince Bismarck, who, though always unscrupulous and cynical, had until lately acted with coolness and judgment, whereas within the last six months his good sense seemed to have entirely deserted him." Andrassy was not to be moved by rumours of German designs on Austria; North Germany and Austria had no national characteristics in common—sooner or later war would probably break out somewhere, but Austria, from her very position desired peace, as she must inevitably suffer from war.<sup>1</sup> Andrassy's valuable support had a great effect on Bismarck, and was to reap its due reward in Berlin three years later, for Bismarck never forgot and never forgave Gorchakov for the humiliation he suffered in May 1875.

For the moment, however, all rumours of war, from whatever source, now ceased absolutely. The Emperor Alexander, in a long and cordial conversation with Lord Odo Russell, said that he was quite reassured by his conversations with the Emperor William that the peace of Europe was in no way in danger, and that he had his authority for sending this message to the Queen.<sup>2</sup> The tone of the press changed completely, and Russell and Walker record no more disturbing conversations with military men during the imperial visit. But before leaving Berlin Gorchakov was to exhibit himself in rather an unpleasing light. In a farewell conversation with Lord Odo Russell he confided to him that Bismarck was full of gratitude and that his gratitude had taken the form of an offer of assistance in the East, which he had refused, saying that all he wanted was peace. But when he proceeded to warn the British Ambassador that not only was Prince Reuss attempting to set him against England, but that

<sup>1</sup>Vienna. Sir A. Buchanan to Lord Derby. 11 May 1875. Fuller's account of Austria's attitude must be modified in the light of this evidence. *American Historical Review* XXIV. No. 2. pp.196-226.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 211. To Lord Derby. 12 May 1875.

Count Münster was also trying to set England against Russia,<sup>1</sup> and represented himself as putting things straight through Shuvalov, Russell could contain himself no longer, but told him he had heard the exact contrary from Münster himself. With typical sang-froid Gorchakov airily dismissed the subject with the inconsequential remark, "If it was not Count Münster it was somebody else." He would not mention names, and wished to bury the incident in oblivion since happily no harm had been done, and then he skilfully steered the conversation into the safer channels of his own great work in preserving peace. He summed up Bismarck as suffering from nerves as a result of over-drinking, over-eating and over-working. He would be well after a few months in the country, and after all, peace was achieved. If the French did not attack Germany, that was most improbable, no other danger lay ahead. He himself wanted good relations with England, and had no aggressive designs in view.<sup>2</sup>

And now the Tsar and Gorchakov left Berlin.<sup>3</sup>

Paris was extremely gratified at the new situation. Decazes congratulated himself particularly on the fact that Great Britain had been induced to move, and hoped it meant that she might further be induced to join the Concert of Europe in a future emergency, but he fully realized the importance of not showing his joy too openly.<sup>4</sup>

Nobody knew better than he what influences had been brought to bear upon the Tsar, and now he confided to Gontaut-Biron that the Russian Emperor had actually come to an accommodation with England in Central Asia in order to arouse her

<sup>1</sup>If Gorchakov's warning was bona fide, it was very badly informed. While Brunnov was still ambassador in London, Münster had written that what was necessary above all in London was a peaceful Russian Ambassador, and that if such an ambassador were appointed he would do all in his power to smoothen his early difficulties, by his knowledge of the relationships and personages in London. Pol. Arch. D.A.A. England. Münster to Bismarck. Confidential. 1 June 1874.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 827. No. 218. To Lord Derby. 13 May 1875.

<sup>3</sup>Professor Fuller has shown clearly the circular despatch which caused Bismarck such bitter annoyance was in reality far more innocuous than it afterwards appeared to his excited imagination, but even if his anger crystallized around an inaccurate detail, Gorchakov's whole attitude was irritating and calculated to arouse resentment. See *American Historical Review* XXIV. pp. 196-227.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. Adams to Lord Derby. Most Confidential. F.O. 244. 287. No. 389. Paris 12 May 1875.

from her apathy, that it was the Tsar who had asked for British support in Berlin and that he had also requested Lord Derby to solicit that of Austria and Italy.<sup>1</sup> This does not fit in very well with the facts as we have them from other sources; if the assertions of Decazes were true their only effect would be to strengthen Bismarck's case against France, but the suggestion that Russia had purchased British support against Germany in favour of peace by Eastern concessions is so parallel to the rumour that Radowitz had gone to St. Petersburg to buy Russian support against France by the same means that it is perhaps permissible to remain sceptical in the absence of corroborative evidence.

While Gorchakov and Decazes gloated, Bismarck was a prey to bitter thoughts; ill in body and tortured in mind, he had been forced in a single hour to face an entirely new orientation of affairs. At first he had thought Lord Odo Russell's instructions had been to address him privately and alone, and when Gorchakov (doubtless enjoying the consternation he was causing) informed him that Lord Derby had instructed Russell to support Russia in any representations she might make, Bismarck suggested the Russian Chancellor was trying to sow dissension between Great Britain and Germany, but when he found that the Emperor confirmed Gorchakov's statement, and when he heard further that Austria and Italy had also been approached by England, he was forced to recognize that she had played an active part "in putting out a fire that was not alight," and was amazed and disappointed, for he was convinced that Lord Odo Russell had consistently reported that peace was not in danger from Germany,<sup>2</sup> and could only attribute her action to the baneful influence of the British Ambassador in Paris, Lord Lyons, whom he suspected was exerted to promote French and Catholic interests and to further a Norfolk "Hauspolitik" rather than a national policy.<sup>3</sup> He expressed this surprise to Lord Odo Russell, who reminded him of the language of the press,

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.459. 16 May 1875. "... You see he was sincere when he spoke of 'our common interests.' ..."

<sup>2</sup>Russell's despatches show that Bismarck was right. The letter in Newton: *Lord Lyons* already referred to which seems (as the editors of the *G.P.* rightly point out) to indicate the contrary, was written immediately under the influence of the *Post* article.

<sup>3</sup>*G.P.* I. pp.279-82. 14 May 1875. Lord Lyons though related to the Duke of Norfolk does not need to be seriously defended against a charge which is only significant of the mentality of the statesman who made it.



and of the threats of the military party. Bismarck again disclaimed all responsibility but when he was asked the meaning of the instructions sent to the ambassadors some time back concerning the menace of French armaments he had no reply to make.<sup>1</sup>

For a fortnight or so the German papers made interesting reading. The semi-official press tried to show that Russia had never seriously doubted Germany's peaceful intentions, the unfounded alarms of England and France had been due to "petticoat" and "ultramontane" influence. Lord Odo Russell supposed that the Empress and the Grand Duchess of Baden must be meant, for Bismarck believed them to be "consistently plotting his downfall"; but Lord Derby's speech in the Lords on 31 May evoked at last an official notice in the *Reichs und Staats Anzeiger*, which admitted that a certain anxiety had been caused by French armaments, but which denied that Germany had ever entertained warlike plans.<sup>2</sup>

Bismarck himself retired to Varzin on 5 June, and was to remain there in seclusion till November, but he thought it advisable to express through Bülow to Lord Odo Russell his disappointment at the tone of Lord Derby's speech. He regretted to find that the understanding he thought he had established with England was not so deep as he had hoped, and was sorry that Lord Derby had not sought to find out through Count Münster his real sentiments. The aggressive power in the past had always been France and not Germany, and he could not understand Great Britain's sudden want of confidence in his policy. He was grieved not to find any sympathy for Germany or himself in the speech, and feared that its tone would only encourage France in her military preparations. Russell urged that Lord Derby's action in offering his services to dispel misunderstandings was in itself proof of cordial relations, of sympathy for Germany and of admiration for Bismarck, and he dismissed as unfounded any fears that France would redouble her efforts. "... No one

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* I. p.467. 28 May 1875. See also Grant: *Notes from a Diary* 1886-1888 p.129. Saburov's account of what can only be described as an ill-bred exchange of recrimination between Lord Odo and Bismarck I feel I must reject as inconsistent with the relations between the two statesmen, and with Russell's courteous character. In telling the tale, I can read the personality of Saburov, but not Russell.

<sup>2</sup>Printed in Plehn: *Bismarcks auswärtige Politik*. p.349.

could deny them the right to make an army suited to their position in Europe, but the warning which they had just received would on the contrary make them carry on their armaments with less energy and greater moderation. . . ." Lord Derby had shown no want of confidence, and was already in possession of Bismarck's views through Count Münster's communication of 12 April, and the "friendly reply to that communication was the offer of the good offices of H.M.G. to remove the apprehensions Prince Bismarck had himself complained of."<sup>1</sup>

The war scare had an aftermath of explanation and accusation which confused rather than clarified the situation, but a reconstruction of the events as they developed from day to day shows that Bismarck as a remorseless conspirator against an innocent, helpless France must disappear from the stage as surely as Gontaut-Biron and Decazes as unscrupulous intriguers against an entirely peaceful Empire. A different Bismarck emerges, whose strange threats and inexplicable demands were inspired by terrors which were as real to his mind as they were exaggerated in fact. For months he had been haunted by twin spectres—the failure of his Ultramontane policy and the success of the French military organization. That the rumours he circulated were without adequate foundation cannot be denied, but it is equally impossible to deny that he must have been receiving extraordinary reports and that he shaped his conduct accordingly. His complaint of ill-health and sleepless nights was not feigned, though he seems to have been unaware that his policy could only bring about the very state of affairs he wished to avoid. His ultimate fear with regard to France was no chimera, and the policy of Decazes was not calculated to lull him into any sense of security. He was at this time like a man who has made a huge fortune by careful speculation, but who has no means of knowing whether his fortune is secure.

Lord Odo Russell had no reason to be ashamed of the part he had played during those difficult months. While fully reporting all dangerous symptoms, he had carefully avoided any scare-mongering on his own account, and had acted with promptitude and tact as soon as his instructions allowed him to do so. He did not see the Chancellor for some months after this for Bismarck was in the country, not indeed, contemplating the danger he had

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 828. No. 258. To Lord Derby. Most confidential. 6 June 1871

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dreaded in February of "an understanding between Russia, France and Austria, which would isolate Germany, and unite her Ultramontane enemies," but to brood over an unforeseen situation, in which Austria alone had supported him against a combination of Russia, England and Italy united in defence of his arch-enemy, France.

BOOK II

THE EASTERN QUESTION

*What fruit will it bear? That is the secret of the future.*



## CHAPTER VI

### THE UPHEAVAL IN THE BALKANS

[1875]

*Lord Odo Russell and the absent Chancellor*—the Herzegovina revolt—Lord Odo Russell's inferences—return of Bismarck to Berlin—the Suez Canal shares—Bismarck's congratulations—visit of Gorchakov to Berlin.

*The Changed European situation*—Bismarck and Gontaut-Biron—Turkey and the Andrassy Note—Bismarck's bid for English co-operation—Lord Odo's views—appeal of Aristarchi Bey to Lord Odo Russell—feeling in Berlin at British delay in answering the Andrassy Note—the Note accepted—misunderstanding over presentation of Note.

*After the Note*—Lord Strathedon's mission—belated consideration of Germany's offer—Bismarck's retreat—Lord Odo Russell's views—sudden collapse of negotiations—Shuvalov's visit to Berlin—Lord Odo Russell's first knowledge of projected occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina—his opposition—subsequent reticence of Bismarck—increasing secrecy of military authorities—the Powers make new proposals.

#### I

THE war clouds that had so suddenly dispersed in the west now threatened to burst in the eastern sky, and for many a long day the troubles in the east became the main preoccupation in Berlin, and filled the largest part of Lord Odo Russell's official life. The rebellion in Bosnia and Herzegovina actually broke out while the British Ambassador was on leave at Carlsbad, and Mr. Macdonell, left in charge of the Embassy, was alarmed to hear from Count Münster, who was then in Berlin, that Bismarck was taking a serious view of the insurrection, as Austria was mobilizing a large force to act on the frontier. But when he asked whether Bismarck had any concrete plan to deal with the grave situation, Münster parried the question by saying, "though the Prince thought the Austro-Hungarian Government had acted injudiciously, if not in-

discreetly, in mobilizing so large a force, he trusted they had yet entertained no idea of intervention, which he thought would find no support with the other Powers." He showed other preoccupations of Bismarck's mind when he further pointed out that he recognized from the growing strength of the ultra-liberal Serbs and the understanding that clearly existed between them and the rebels that this was no local and spontaneous movement, but a bigger thing altogether. The Bourse had already been affected by it and it was probable that it was supported by the Austrian military party though not, Bismarck thought, by Andrassy.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Odo Russell returned in September to find that public opinion in general was anti-Turk, and that in official circles there appeared no tendency to separate from Austrian policy as led by Andrassy. From Le Flô, who was passing through Berlin, he learned that Russia had expressed a sincere desire for peace and the integrity of the Empire, and to act side by side with Austria in her efforts to improve the *status quo* in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>2</sup> But otherwise the news he gleaned was scanty—in those early days nobody seemed willing to commit himself too far. Bismarck was still at Varzin and the Emperor had gone on his long postponed visit to Italy, and all Russell could learn from Bülow was that at the moment Germany would not compromise herself beyond offering a general support to any united action on the part of her allies; so long as they were in agreement her course was clear, her only difficulty would arise in the event, happily not expected, of a quarrel between the two.<sup>3</sup> The press obediently followed the official lead and ventured no opinion with regard to the insurrection.

There was indeed a complete lull at the Foreign Office, and in view of the non-committal attitude of Bismarck Lord Odo Russell's presence in Berlin during the summer could hardly have helped the situation, but this did not prevent Disraeli from making an irritable complaint because the Ambassador had not cut his leave short, though it does not seem to have been suggested to him that he should have done so.<sup>4</sup> On his return he

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 829. No. 345. To Lord Derby. Private and Confidential. 20 August 1875. See also *Andrassy* II. p.259.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 397. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 24 September 1875.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 830. No. 409. To Lord Derby. 1 October 1875.

<sup>4</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 13.

found everybody complaining that it was impossible to get information, diplomats lamenting that they were totally unable to report to their Governments the general views of Germany on foreign policy. To these complaints Lord Odo Russell used to reply, "No one knows or can say what Prince Bismarck's views and intentions really are while he lives in seclusion at Varzin and all Prussian officials are bound by oath never to speak on the affairs of their respective departments."<sup>1</sup>

The Foreign Office might be reticent, but Lord Odo Russell was persistent. Not to be daunted by Bülow's embarrassed silence on the Eastern Question he drew up a memorandum for Lord Derby based on all the confidential sources he could explore.<sup>2</sup> Bismarck, he found, uncertain of Russia and still smarting at her action last May, was not going to commit himself too soon, but would wait until events favoured his plans, "the breaking up of Austria and the neutralization of the minor German sovereignties." He professed indignation at Russia's deceit in Austro-Turkish affairs, but in the absence of official information Lord Odo Russell could not see clearly where the deceit lay. Conditions on the whole were favourable to peace even though England must be prepared for a partial occupation of Turkish territory by Austria and Russia. The National party in Germany would willingly see the partition of Turkey. There was a desire to hand over some of her possessions to Austria in return for the ceding of the German provinces of Austria to her northern neighbour. Even Russia might help herself to Constantinople, for the only country Germany wished to injure was France, and it would be all the better if the interests of the Catholic Church could be injured too. Germany would not object if England occupied Egypt. A difference between Russia and Austria over Turkey might enable Bismarck to regain his position over Russia which he had lost the previous May. The obvious advantage to Bismarck of dissensions led Lord Odo Russell to conclude that it explained his previous attempts to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 830. No. 438. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 23 October 1875. A story illustrative of this was recounted by Lord Odo: "A certain diplomatist asked a clerk of the Foreign Office which department he belonged to so as to be able to send him a book he wished to read. The clerk replied with visible embarrassment that he was not allowed to disclose the name of the department he worked in, but that 'Foreign Office, Wilhelmstrasse' would find him without further specifications."

<sup>2</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 87-90.



create mutual suspicion between England and Russia earlier in the year.

Bismarck who had been waiting on events patiently but not cheerfully in Varzin, at length returned to Berlin on 21 November in as gloomy a frame of mind as he had left it in May. The following day he made a speech in the Reichstag which was little calculated to raise the spirits of his hearers. On foreign affairs he was dumb, but he intimated to a disappointed House that the serious financial position would necessitate increased income tax and indirect taxes as well. A period of deep financial depression was, indeed, about to set in. It was in these grave circumstances that Andrassy's plans for the pacification of the East had to be considered in Berlin.

While Gorchakov was on his way to Berlin to discuss these proposals startling news reached Germany from England. Lord Odo Russell came to him with the information that the Suez Canal shares had been bought by the British Government. Nothing could have happened more opportunely. Bismarck had not met Gorchakov since the humiliating occasion of the previous May, and he would have been more than human not to feel a secret satisfaction that Gorchakov must feel a little sore at this moment and that the sharp edge of his usual bland self-satisfaction would be somewhat softened. It was therefore with unfeigned delight that he cordially congratulated Lord Odo Russell.<sup>1</sup> The British Government had done "the right thing at the right moment."<sup>2</sup> He fully approved and telegraphed without delay to the German Ambassadors in Paris, St. Petersburg and Vienna to prevent untoward accidents in the way of any contrary expressions of opinion.

Lord Odo must have been gratified at his first interview with Bismarck after his long absence.

*To Lord Derby.* Most Confidential. 29 November 1875.<sup>3</sup>—  
 "... Prince Bismarck then read me some portions of a despatch

<sup>1</sup>Russell's despatches do not support Disraeli's view of Bismarck's attitude. It was an insular misconception to think that the purchase would annoy Bismarck. It was on the contrary calculated to fit in with his policy. See *Disraeli* V. 450. The Queen's gratification at the "blow to Bismarck" seems likewise misplaced.

<sup>2</sup>In view of Bismarck's imminent meeting with Gorchakov, there is more in this statement than meets the eye. It is interesting to note that this was the very phrase repeated by the Crown Princess to the Queen. *Ibid* V. 452.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 831. No. 488.

he had received from Count Münster, detailing the circumstances of the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by H.M.G. and describing the 'enthusiasm with which the measure had been received by all parties, and which would, in his opinion, be unanimously approved by Parliament.'

Prince Bismarck paused at the word 'unanimous' and said that the expression was strong, but he envied a government that could look forward to unanimous approvals in Parliament.

Count Münster then goes on to pass a high eulogium on Mr. Disraeli as the greatest leader and parliamentary tactician in the history of England, and prognosticates prolonged life to a government whose far and clear-sighted policy has known when and how to solve the Eastern Question as far as English interests are concerned without bloodshed and through the timely exercise of the arts of peace and of high statesmanship.

Prince Bismarck said that it was the privilege of friendly Powers to lend each other their moral support in the attainment of national interests, so long as these interests did not clash, but in the present case the interests of England were the interests of Germany.

He had on former occasions told me of the apprehensions he entertained lest the interests of England and of Russia in the East should lead to a conflict, and he more than once pointed out to Prince Gorchakov and Count Shuvalov, but without producing the impression he desired, how much that danger might be diminished if the free passage to India through Egypt were guaranteed to England, to which she had among all nations the greatest claim and the clearest right.

He could not but hope that the security England would now enjoy in regard to her communications with India would in course of time deprive the inevitable extension of Russia in Central Asia of much of its supposed importance and threatening aspect in the eyes of Englishmen and would facilitate the establishment of those intimate and cordial relations between England and Russia which were so essential to the maintenance of peace and the interests of civilization. He therefore would give his most hearty support to the policy H.M.G. had now inaugurated by the purchase of the Khedive's shares in the Suez Canal.

I thanked Prince Bismarck for the friendly feelings he expressed towards England and H.M.G. which I said I would at once communicate to Your Lordship, and in the course of the conversation which ensued, I asked him his opinion on the prospects of the Herzegovina insurrection.

Prince Bismarck replied that the Emperor had asked him the

same question a few hours ago and he would give me the same answer.

Germany has no direct interests in European Turkey, but indirectly the greatest in preventing Austria and Russia from quarrelling over the Sick Man's inheritance.

Germany must therefore adhere strictly to the part of peace-maker and never side so completely with either of her allies as to make two against one in a tripartite alliance.

In regard to the Herzegovina he believed that Count Andrassy and Prince Gorchakov agreed in substance and only differed about words and expressions and that the last Austrian proposals awaiting the arrival of Prince Gorchakov in St. Petersburg would be accepted by him after he had corrected Count Andrassy's wording of the draft to his own taste.

Prince Gorchakov was expected to-night in Berlin and he would see him and do his best in conversation to-morrow to promote the good understanding now existing between Austria and Russia and to make it as lasting and sincere as possible.

It was clear that Count Andrassy and the Hungarians were against an annexation policy, which could bring them no advantage, and might possibly weaken their position in Austria, and Prince Gorchakov was as clearly against a breaking up of Turkey and the inevitable conflict which would follow, for which Russia was not prepared at present.

What Russia might do in the remote future he was of course not prepared to say, but as far as the present question was concerned he believed in the sincere desire of both Prince Gorchakov and Count Andrassy to find a peaceful solution acceptable to the Sultan as well as to the European Powers and beneficial to the populations concerned so that he did not anticipate any serious trouble or complication in the East at present while Count Andrassy held office in Austria.

I asked whether Count Andrassy's position in Austria was a strong one?

Prince Bismarck said it happily was, but there existed a party in Austria who were intriguing against him and trying to get the Emperor to put Baron Hülner in his place and Count Beust at the Paris Embassy.

The Emperor was open to new influences, and among the archdukes there were partisans of an annexationist policy who represented Count Andrassy to the Emperor as being too German. When an archduke last year published a pamphlet against Germany, Count Andrassy persuaded the Emperor to reprimand him, and when an Austrian officer, Colonel Labe, wrote another

pamphlet in favour of Germany, the archduke persuaded the Emperor to punish him also, which showed that H.M. was open to contrary and conflicting influences. . . ."

This despatch does not fit in very well with Disraeli's letter to Lady Bradford. He was presumably so eager to write to tell her the good news that he did not wait to read what the Ambassador had to say, or he could hardly have written: "Bismarck called on Odo Russell, but the latter was unhappily not at home. Odo called at the F.O. and saw Bülow, who handed him a telegram from Münster, saying, 'the purchase of the Suez Canal has been received by the whole English nation with enthusiasm but not a word could be got out of Bülow himself.'" <sup>1</sup> Bismarck's attitude suggests, on the contrary, that his expansiveness after so long a period of silence was a sign of his relief that England was about to take an interest in the East.

Prince Gorchakov did not leave Berlin without having in his turn a long conversation with Lord Odo Russell. The urbane courtesy of the Ambassador brought out all his rather overwhelming affability as usual, but though gushing, he was non-committal. He said that he had secretly cherished a wish to retire into private life after the happy results of English and Russian co-operation the previous May, but the Emperor had refused to part with him, and now it was impossible to yield up his task until he had brought it to a successful conclusion. This task might be tackled in one of two ways—"a complete reconstruction, or a mere replastering which would keep matters together for another term of years." Everybody must want to postpone the first as long as possible, and as far as he was concerned, "he would only consent to give his best efforts to a *replâtrage à six et pas à trois*." He relied on English and French co-operation and was quite prepared to accept the solution proposed by Count Andrassy, in whom he had complete confidence.

He invited Lord Odo Russell's approval of the part he had already played in keeping Serbia and Montenegro in order, and admitted that the other Powers had done theirs in maintaining the dignity and authority of the Porte. Since everybody had behaved so wisely up to the present nothing remained but to do something really practical and lasting for the Christians and

<sup>1</sup>Disraeli V. 450-1.

something which the Sultan must guarantee to carry out. He could not say more until he had studied Andrassy's proposals, nor even then could he say for certain that they would be the best means to adopt. Things were changing so rapidly that a plan which was wise to-day might be foolish to-morrow. The change in the English press astounded him—it now wanted to go much farther than he did himself.

Gorchakov then touched lightly on many subjects—praised Decazes, discussed Bismarck's gratifying restoration to health, and spoke in flattering terms of Lord Augustus Loftus—but of the Suez Canal, not one syllable. And so he departed, effusive to the last, but as he went Lord Odo thought how cleverly he had avoided talking business.<sup>1</sup> On reading his Ambassador's despatch, Lord Derby was of the same opinion.

## II

The world to which Bismarck had returned was a different one from that which he had left in the spring, and little by little the new policy this new world demanded began to disclose itself. Lord Odo Russell soon noticed that in the Reichstag the Catholic leader surprised all by taking his party unanimously in the lobby in favour of the government estimates, and further intimated that the Party would not take part in the discussion of the penal code but would vote with the National party. The Nationals took alarm. It looked as if Bismarck were preparing a new coalition between his old conservative supporters, the "free conservatives," and any of the Catholic party ready to meet him in support of a policy which would not commend itself to the progressive elements of the House. Meditating on all this Lord Odo thought it was significant for the future even if it did not forebode any immediate change of policy.<sup>2</sup>

On one point Bismarck soon made his wishes known to Lord Odo Russell. He had come back from Varzin determined to rid himself of the unwelcome presence of Gontaut-Biron, who, he persuaded himself, had been mainly reponsible for his dis-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 831. No. 49. To Lord Derby. 1 December 1875.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 831. No. 503. To Lord Derby. 8 December 1875.

comfiture earlier in the year. With the Eastern Question reopened, France might find fresh opportunities to gain advantages at the cost of Germany. The new situation demanded an ambassador with whom he could establish different relations, for he now hated Gontaut-Biron as only he could hate. When Bismarck poured out his soul to Russell the latter was truly distressed, for he considered his French colleague not only amiable, but one of the most honourable French gentlemen he had ever met, and he told Bismarck so. Bismarck replied that he was unable to transact business with an ambassador inexperienced in diplomacy who seemed to have learned his profession from French novels and old memoirs, but Lord Odo defended his absent colleague, maintaining that "there might be some advantage in dealing with an honourable French gentleman, straightforward, honest and intelligent, who brought a fresh unsophisticated mind, free from the diplomatic traditions of the empire to receive the impressions Prince Bismarck wished to convey to the French Government."

Bismarck listened with no great pleasure to this defence, and cynically rejoined that he was not so unsophisticated as Lord Odo Russell seemed to think. He was under Jesuit influence and constantly associated with them, such a man was not a fit representative of France in Germany. But this shot missed fire, for Lord Odo courteously reminded him that there was after all nothing necessarily sinister if a devout Catholic, speaking no German, sought the congenial society of his fellow co-religionists. This reminder only roused him to fresh attacks. In order to prove to Russell that his colleague was a crafty intriguer, he came down to the real cause of all his irritable hatred against Gontaut-Biron. He said that he had absolute proof that he had used his time in St. Petersburg the year previously to stir up Russia to interfere to enforce a peace that was not threatened. Once started on this theme, Bismarck did not seem able to stop, and the uncomfortable Ambassador had to listen to a long tirade that was so bitter, and involved so many members of St. Petersburg and Berlin society, that he did not even feel justified in placing it on record.<sup>1</sup> Then, quoting from Reuss's despatches

<sup>1</sup>"Prince Bismarck then entered into details, and mentioned various incidents and names connected with Petersburg and Berlin society to illustrate the ultramontane and anti-German sympathies of the French Ambassador which I refrain from placing on record in this despatch."

in a final fit of fury declared once more that relations between France and Germany could only be improved by the recall of the Ambassador.<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck had to wait two years before he got his desire.

As the year drew to a close there were signs that German policy in the East was not likely to favour the Sick Man at the expense of his doctors. Pessimism was so strongly reflected on the face of the Turkish Ambassador at a dinner given by the Emperor on 21 December that Lord Odo Russell asked him if the heat had been too much for him. He answered that it was not the heat, but something far more important. The Emperor had been very gracious to him personally, but had spoken to him most seriously of Turkey's action in publishing the firmans of reform after the Austrian and Russian Governments had repeatedly requested her to delay the publication until Andrassy's note had been made public. "And His Majesty had added that the Sultan's ministers were not justified in disregarding the wishes and advice of the allied Emperors, *car, quand trois Empereurs veulent quelque chose, ils le veulent bien.*" These words, so menacing in tone, seemed to the Turkish Ambassador of evil portent for the future.

As soon as the Andrassy Note was actually before the governments of Europe, Bismarck made a bid for co-operation with Great Britain. On 2 January he expressed a wish to see Lord Odo Russell, who, to spare him trouble, called at the Foreign Office, where a long and interesting conversation took place.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 2 January 1876.<sup>2</sup>—

"... He told me his object was to talk over Count Andrassy's proposed solution to the Herzegovinian question, about which he very much wished to come to an understanding with H.M.G. He thought a frank and convenient exchange of views and wishes on Turkish affairs between us was very desirable at present because England and Germany were the two Powers most desirous of maintaining the peace of Europe. Before answering and dealing with Count Andrassy's proposals for the pacification of Bosnia, he would therefore be very glad to know Your

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 831. No. 513. To Lord Derby. Secret. 16 December 1875.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 8.

Lordship's opinion so as to regulate his own as far as possible accordingly, and reserve the power of giving his support to H.M.G. if they wished it, by withholding at the outset an unqualified approval of the Austro-Russian scheme, which might disturb the good relations he wished to keep up with England. Indeed, he would gladly find an opportunity of cementing these good relations even more closely, so essential are they, in his opinion, to the good of Germany and the peace of Europe, by co-operating with H.M.G. in regard to Turkish affairs, should difficulties arise in which Your Lordship would be willing to accept the friendly assistance of Germany in the general interest of peace. He did not agree with those who said: 'Things are too bad to last so any longer,' in his opinion Turkey might yet be kept together with a little good-will—but good-will depended on mutual forbearance and cordial co-operation.

I said I could answer for the cordial co-operation of H.M.G. with him to maintain the peace of Europe at all times—as well as for their earnest desire to entertain the most friendly relations with Germany, but if no exchange of views on Eastern affairs had taken place, it must be solely attributed to the marked reticence of the German Government, which excluded any and every attempt at general conversation on Eastern affairs ever since the declaration in the official *Reichsanzeiger* that Germany, having no interests in the East, left the initiative to her Austrian and Russian allies in dealing with Eastern affairs, and would simply maintain a silent and observant attitude in regard to Turkey. Count Münster in London had been as reticent as Herr v. Bülow in Berlin and it was not for want of good-will on our part that we had been kept in ignorance of Count Andrassy's proposed policy by the Northern allies until to-day.

Prince Bismarck replied that he could not communicate Count Andrassy's plans to us because he had not hitherto known them himself—nor did he personally attach much importance to such administrative reforms—plans which were all more or less alike in substance, although their wording gave rise to eternal dissensions among the friends of Turkey. To his mind the important question was to know what the ambitious politicians of Austria and Russia were secretly contemplating. To explain his meaning he would begin at the beginning.

Germany had no special interests in Turkey, but the greatest in European peace, which in this case depended on good relations between Austria and Russia. He had left the initiative in dealing with the insurrection question to them, and when agreed promised his support. Meanwhile he had noted, while at



Varzin, with the greatest surprise the tone of the independent German press which did the honours of European Turkey in favour of Austria, 'whose mission,' as they called it, 'lay down the Danube' and whose future conquests in the East Germany would approve and support. To his mind a mission down the Danube, which was a navigable river, might well end in the Black Sea—but that was neither here nor there—the German press would have it that Austria must occupy the territory the Sultan was about to lose. To counteract the evil effect these articles were producing he ordered the declaration I had alluded to to be published in the *Reichsanzeiger* and had conscientiously acted upon it ever since.

Of course at Vienna and St. Petersburg the articles were attributed to him by his enemies, and the declaration to the Emperor, all of which was untrue.

Meanwhile Austria and Russia had made their plans and submitted them to the guaranteeing Powers and the question was about to enter into a new phase.

On this new phase, namely the administration of the Austro-Russian remedy to the Sick Man, he wished for a previous confidential agreement with Your Lordship in the general interest of harmony in the European concert, as well as in the special interest of Germany, to whom the friendship of England was quite as essential as that of her Northern allies. Having no special German interests to guard in Turkey he was at liberty to support those of England if H.M.G. wished for his support in coming events, in which case he thought his influence might be beneficially exercised at Vienna and St. Petersburg.

At present Prince Gorchakov, Count Andrassy and himself were agreed and acting cordially together, but there were ambitious men in Russia and Austria who might interfere. For ought (*sic*) he knew the late visit of the Archduke Albrecht, the sworn enemy of Germany, to St. Petersburg might have been the occasion of an attempt to sow discord between Russia and Germany.

The danger he apprehended most in Austria was the downfall of the present administration. Andrassy, as a Hungarian, resisted the annexation policy the Slav party were urging on the Emperor, but if he fell we must be prepared to deal with an annexation policy in Austria and its consequences in Russia. For his part he was willing to join with England in resisting it or not, as H.M.G. might think best for the good of Europe. Alone, without the support of England, he would not resist the annexing tendencies of Austria and Russia in Turkey because he did not

think either of those Powers would be strengthened by such increase of territory, or the interests of Germany affected by it. On this question he would however reserve his opinion until he knew that of H.M.G. and through H.M.G. he also hoped to know what the French Government might be disposed to do. He would be glad to see France take again a lively interest in oriental matters which might turn her attention from brooding over a war of revenge against Germany. He would also welcome the co-operation of Italy. If he could thus obtain for Germany the good-will of England and her friends he could look to the future with greater confidence.

Germany could not well afford to let Austria and Russia become too intimate behind her back—nor could she let them quarrel with safety to herself. In the event of a quarrel between them, popular opinion and sympathy would probably side with Austria, which would make a rancorous and dangerous enemy of Russia, who would then find a willing ally in France to injure Germany.

If on the other hand Germany took the part of Russia the consequences might be fatal to the very existence of Austria, who would go to pieces like a ship on a sandbank.

There remained neutrality—but neutrality would be impossible for Germany if her allies quarrelled, and would involve a loss of time Germany could not incur as matters stood.

All these considerations he wished to submit confidentially to H.M.G. and to solicit an exchange of views in return, in the hope of being able to co-operate with England for the maintenance of European peace.

I said I would communicate with Your Lordship and bring him an answer as soon as possible.

Our conversation lasted for over an hour and a half and I have written it down in haste to catch the post. I must therefore solicit Your Lordship's indulgence if the report is not as clearly expressed or as complete as it ought to be, although I believe it to be quite accurate. . . ."

On reading over this hastily written report the following day Lord Odo Russell found little to "alter in substance, although much I should like to have expressed better or more clearly," but he also noticed an omission which he proceeded to make good.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 3 January 1876.<sup>1</sup>—

"... [Bismarck] said that from his private information it resulted that Prince Gorchakov boasted of having established more intimate and confidential relations with H.M.G. than had ever existed between Russia and England before, whilst on the other hand Count Andrassy manifested a deep-rooted distrust of England, difficult to explain or account for. He asked if I could account for it.—I said I could not.

The impression left on my mind by this conversation is that Prince Bismarck means what he says, and really desires a frank and cordial understanding with England, for the following reasons:

When he invented the alliance of the three Northern Powers, he intended to play his two allies against each other, using both to bully Europe for his own glory. Outwitted by Prince Gorchakov last May, he had the humiliation before all the world to be bound over to keep the peace by Russia.

From that moment Russia commanded the sympathies of the peace-loving Powers and took the lead of the Northern Alliance—Austria also grew more intimate with Russia than with Germany, Prince Bismarck felt isolated, the tripartite alliance became a burden to him, and he vowed revenge.

If Russia alone, or Russia and Austria combined, wanted something in Turkey England objected to, he would throw over his Northern Allies and in the name of peace and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire give the full moral support of Germany to England to maintain the *status quo*—if then in his turn, he could bind over Russia to keep the peace, his revenge would be complete.

Should however the combination not be realized, he has at least laid the foundation stone of a cordial understanding with England in the interest of peace, threatened at present by the revival of the Oriental Question.

Allied to Russia and Austria alone—Germany can be dragged by them against her wish and will into war—United with England to prevent war in the East, Germany regains her independence and her control over Russia and Austria.

Lord Odo's summing up of the reasons which lay behind Bismarck's offer were perhaps sufficient to justify Disraeli's reluctance to consider them, though Russell himself was anxious

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 9.

to see closer relations established, but can hardly be reconciled with Buckle's assertion that no attention was paid to England at this time as an interested Power.<sup>1</sup> That the Ambassador was not deceiving himself in thinking that Bismarck was sincere is proved by Bülow's intimation to Münster that the conversation was indeed meant as an overture to Lord Derby. He deplored England's apparent indifference and said Lord Odo Russell seemed convinced that England was no longer prepared to follow her traditional Turkish policy, but that her interests lay only in safeguarding her route to India. He did not encourage the view that Austria might occupy part of Turkish territory with impunity. Russia might in that case demand compensation, perhaps in Bessarabia, which in turn would affect Germany's commercial interests. Bismarck had emphasized that now Prussia was supreme in Central Europe she had taken the place of Austria as England's natural ally and hoped she would see the situation in the same light. His remarks showed that he welcomed Disraeli's resolution and energy. Lord Odo Russell's own personal desire for closer relations was self-evident and scarcely needed mentioning.<sup>2</sup>

While Bismarck was inviting British co-operation the Turkish Ambassador was imploring Lord Odo Russell on the other hand to move his Government in favour of counter-proposals to the Andrassy Note, for the Sultan, to the chagrin of the Northern Powers, had issued a firman just in time to forestall the Austrian Minister's proposals. Aristarchi Bey called on Lord Odo Russell and placed before him in confidence his Government's instructions and his own views. The Note would cause great embarrassment in Constantinople (even though quite consistent with the firman of 12 December) because it omitted to demand the disarmament of the rebels before participating in the benefits of the reforms. The dilemma was that the Sultan could neither submit to the dictation of the Emperors on the one hand, nor reject the proposal without offending the Powers on the other. He persuaded Lord Odo Russell to copy out his own proposals

<sup>1</sup>The imperial Powers paid no attention this winter to Disraeli's hint that Great Britain's interests in the solution of the Eastern Question were as considerable as theirs." Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 18.

<sup>2</sup>*G.P.* II. 20-31. I wonder if these documents could be those referred to by Disraeli when he says: "Bismarck seems to mean business." Buckle attributes it to January 1875, but the remark seems meaningless then and fits well here. V. 420.

and forward them to Lord Derby, but without mentioning his name so that they might reach the Sultan by way of the British Government. The suggestion was that the Sultan would promise each ambassador individually to apply the reforms to the insurgent districts as soon as these presented an address of submission. If, as the Porte believed, the Northern Powers sincerely wished for the settling of the troubles and the maintenance of general peace such a demonstration should be easy to get, and it would be equally easy for the Sultan then without loss of dignity to initiate the combined reforms of the Note with those of the Turkish firman, and an official notification could be made to the representatives of all six Powers in reply to their identic demands.<sup>1</sup>

This suggestion found no favour in Lord Derby's eyes, and Sir Henry Elliot remained without instructions in this sense. As for the German Chancellor, he had to be content with platonic thanks and a general assurance that England sincerely desired to co-operate with Germany over Turkish affairs.<sup>2</sup> It was rather a tame ending, and Lord Odo occupied no enviable position for the next few weeks. While the Queen, Disraeli and Derby were corresponding at their leisure on the Note, Russell was passing anxious days in an excited Berlin. Public opinion was on edge to know how the other three Powers would respond to it. Italy speedily gave satisfactory assurances, but a Paris rumour that France was proposing to consult Britain before replying raised the political temperature to fever heat. A western alliance it was feared was being sprung upon the three Emperors. A pale shadow of the previous scare arose. The excitable and sensitive Prince Polignac confided to Major-General Walker that he was glad to be returning to France as he expected a speedy outbreak of hostilities. From Germany's extreme reserve towards him over military matters he concluded an attack was imminent.

"He is quite right about the secrecy and reserve," drily commented the British attaché, "but quite wrong in thinking that this is observed towards him alone." But when Polignac hinted that Bismarck had designs on Holland and revived the story that Moltke was preparing a preventive war, Walker could not help the thought crossing his mind that perhaps France was hoping

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 14. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 8 January 1876.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 15.

to fish in troubled waters in the expectation of reconquering her lost provinces.<sup>1</sup> It was in these circumstances that France suddenly accepted the Note.

All the agitation was now focussed on the blameless but unfortunate Lord Odo Russell. He told sceptical inquirers that no answer was possible until the ministers could meet in London, but "every kind of absurd interpretation was put upon the delay, culminating in war rumours and a panic on the Bourse." He calmly insisted that every war rumour could be discredited, and although not rattled by the unwelcome attention he was receiving could not refrain from a gentle hint to Lord Derby that he himself shared the general apprehension and that if Turkey were encouraged to be obstinate (and without British encouragement she would be more accommodating) the Northern Powers would be obliged to enforce their demands at Constantinople with obvious dangers to peace. He tried to impress Derby with the necessity for despatch, since the moment his decision was known the excitement would die away. He observed that the very importance attached to Britain's decision proved beyond all doubt that her influence was very much greater than was believed in certain quarters.<sup>2</sup> But dangerous as the delay looked in Berlin, it afforded Disraeli extreme self-satisfaction. He saw himself alarming Austria to such an extent that she had induced the Porte by large concessions to beg England to associate herself with the other Powers, and when Musurus brought the expected request he saw in it the triumph of his policy.<sup>3</sup> Andrassy may or may not have been alarmed, but these tactics in time sensibly cooled Bismarck's desire for English co-operation. The seed was thus planted which all too soon was to bear evil fruit. Had England been more prompt in January, she might not have been treated so cavalierly in May.

Disraeli was not prepared to go the whole length of refusal altogether, despite his delay, and on 21 January Lord Odo Russell learned, to his intense relief, that the Note was approved. He was overwhelmed with congratulations and made little secret of his delight that London had not stood aloof, but his relief was shortlived. An annoying misunderstanding in the

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 850. Walker's Despatch. Confidential. 5 January 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 24. To Lord Derby. 15 January 1876. Derby's cursory comment was, "Approve reply to enquirers."

Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 19.

presentation of the Note occurred. Bismarck had already sent his instructions to Constantinople simultaneously with Andrassy and Gorchakov when he heard from Count Münster that Lord Derby would like them delayed until the British instructions had been received by Sir Henry Elliot. He sent Bülow to Lord Odo to explain the situation. He would have been only too glad to comply with Lord Derby's request if he had known it in time—but as London was silent he was obliged to fall in with Vienna and St. Petersburg. He laid the utmost stress on his desire to act in concert with Britain and to support her wishes if he knew what they were and he begged Russell to inform Lord Derby that he hoped his failure to do so on this occasion would be no impediment to the "cordial understanding he wished to establish with H.M.G. in regard to 'Turkish affairs.'"<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Bismarck was getting into touch with Andrassy to ask him to delay communicating the Note until Sir Henry Elliot's instructions had been received. Andrassy, impatient and annoyed, refused.<sup>2</sup> Bismarck, too unwell to go to the Foreign Office, asked Lord Odo Russell to go and see him at his home instead, that he might express his regret that he had again been unsuccessful. He reiterated his desire for an understanding, and his conviction that Germany, having no direct interests in the East, was in a position to support the legitimate aspirations of her friends to maintain the peace of Europe. Once again he outlined his policy, repeating what he had already said a few days ago. England was the Power most directly interested in the maintenance of peace and a thorough understanding with her before complications arose would find Germany prepared to face all difficulties by her side. These difficulties might soon arise, since the interests of Austria and Russia were likely to conflict in the East. Germany would be obliged to take sides and it would strengthen her position if through knowledge of England's policy she could make it her aim to support it by making it her own, thus securing beforehand England's moral support in favour of peace.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 41. To Lord Derby. Secret. 26 January 1876. Lord Tenterden, reading this despatch endorsed it with the remark that Lord Derby might like to make some comment as Bismarck was apparently hinting that his overtures had not been met. Lord Derby agreed to discuss the matter on the following day.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 55. To Lord Derby. 31 January 1876.

So far for the future—but there were present complications to be considered. The court military party in Austria, headed by the Archduke Albrecht, who had warned the Emperor of Russia that he expected hostile surprises on the part of Germany and that he would not be happy unless he beat them in open battle, and the anti-Hungarian party, headed by von Schmerling, were threatening Andrassy's position. "A change of policy or a change of ministry in Austria might alter her present relations with Russia and Germany overnight." He entreated England's aid to keep Andrassy in power by using her moral influence in Vienna.<sup>1</sup>

These communications and Tenterden's remark led Derby to the decision that it was time to consider Bismarck's overture. He wrote to Windsor, where the Queen was considering the matter with Disraeli. She herself was rather impressed. Always full of faith in Lord Odo Russell, his obvious leaning towards a cordial understanding and his suggestion that no time was to be lost carried great weight with her, and she found Disraeli inclined to agree. Lord Derby hesitated, but the Queen urged him to open up a perfectly free interchange of opinion on Eastern affairs.<sup>2</sup> But Derby was diffident—it was not easy to persuade him to plunge into a stream that might carry him into the unknown waters of a European entanglement.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, impelled by his chief and the Queen he rejoiced Lord Odo Russell's heart by authorizing him to open conversations with Bismarck on the subject.<sup>4</sup>

## III

Meanwhile the Sultan had not yet accepted the Note. Before doing so he despatched an unexpected visitor to Berlin on a mysterious mission. Puzzled by the arrival of Lord Strathedon and Campbell from Turkey, Russell telegraphed for information, only to find that Lord Derby professed complete ignorance

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 850. No. 56. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 1 February 1876.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. 443-444.

<sup>3</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 21.

<sup>4</sup>From Derby's letter (*Ibid* 22) it is clear that private correspondence had passed between him and Russell on the subject.



of the matter,<sup>1</sup> and all Lord Odo could learn was gleaned in Berlin. Lord Strathedon's own confidential story was that Raschid Pasha had sent him with a memorandum asking Bismarck "to take a more active part or interest in the welfare and preservation of the Turkish Empire than he had hitherto done," and shortly after Lord Odo Russell discovered that his instructions covered a denunciation of Russian and Austrian duplicity, a request for Germany's influence to recall the pro-rebel Governor of Dalmatia and to persuade Russia to allow Turkey to occupy Montenegro if necessary. A gracious but non-committal Bismarck neither encouraged him to be expansive nor to present the memorandum and letter. He seemed more anxious to discuss the state of his own health, the war scare of the previous spring, Germany's satisfaction with her present territorial boundaries, the utility of the Northern Alliance and his long friendship with Prince Gorchakov. Strathedon and Bismarck were evidently at cross purposes—Count Andrassy and his Note were not even mentioned, and Bismarck betrayed not the faintest interest in the fate of Turkey. The Turkish Ambassador, on the other hand, deeply pained at being kept entirely in the dark by his Government, bewailed to Lord Odo Russell his fears that so imprudent a mission would be bitterly resented by Russia and Austria. The British Ambassador also received visits from his Russian and Austrian colleagues who showed obvious relief when he assured them that the British Government was entirely unconnected with the mission.<sup>2</sup> Whatever Turkey might have hoped from this abortive mission its result left her with no option but to accept the Andrassy Note.

Lord Odo, now in possession of his instructions, sought a confidential interview with Bismarck. Apologizing for the delay, he said it was not caused by calculated reserve, but by the difficulties of a situation where the future was so obscure and circumstances varied daily.

*To Lord Derby.* Most Confidential. 19 February 1876.—  
". . . Your Lordship, I said, could now only indicate in general terms the opinion of H.M.G.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 830. No. 58. To Lord Derby. 2 February 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 830. No. 68. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 9 February 1876.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 76.

First, that any disturbance of the territorial *status quo* would be inadvisable and dangerous, as one rectification of frontiers could not fail to lead to another, and when a policy of annexation was once entered upon no one could foresee where it would end.

Next, Your Lordship thought that in the extremely critical position in which the Turkish Empire was placed, H.M.G. could not afford to be too reticent as to giving advice, or too scrupulous as to urging its adoption strongly. Do what we might the danger was great, but while the prospect of overcoming it remained, our duty was to persevere.

In regard to the opinion expressed to me about Count Andrassy's position by Prince Bismarck I said that Your Lordship entirely agreed with him that the substitution at Vienna of what would probably be an absolutist and warlike policy, for one which, like the present, was pacific and constitutional, would be a misfortune to Europe, but that it was not the English habit to interfere, however indirectly, in the internal affairs of other countries, nor could H.M.G. do so with the slightest effect.

Prince Bismarck acknowledged Your Lordship's message in reply to his with cordial expressions of thanks, and added that all he had asked for was the facility of exchanging ideas confidentially with H.M.G. in case of danger. At the present moment, he said, the general aspect of affairs was satisfactory and if the insurrection in Bosnia was suppressed before the spring set in he thought the Eastern Question could be dismissed from our minds for some time to come.

In regard to Count Andrassy's position he was also happy to say that the latest news from Vienna was reassuring, and that the position of the Hungarians in general had been strengthened by the attitude lately assumed towards their opponents by the Emperor.

He hoped this improved state of things might be lasting.

He fully appreciated the policy of H.M.G. not to interfere, however indirectly, in the internal affairs of other countries, and he had but lately experienced the danger of interfering, for he awakened the susceptibilities of the Emperor Francis Joseph in trying to support Count Andrassy too warmly. More circumspection would be necessary in the future.

Unfortunately Germany had enemies in Austria near the throne always at work to excite their Emperor's suspicions. Besides the Poles, the Czechs and the Slavs generally and the ultramontanes were anti-German in sentiment. The latter were as favourable as the former to an annexation policy because they

hoped to eradicate the Mohammedan element and make Roman Catholic provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina which the Hungarians alone could prevent.

I said that though some of our leading newspapers appeared to urge Austria to occupy those provinces, a disturbance of the territorial *status quo* as I had observed before would be very unfavourably looked upon by the people of England, and I asked whether he had heard of any intention on the part of Russia to try and recover the Dobrudja which she had lost by the Crimean War.

Prince Bismarck said he had not yet heard the question alluded to, but as far as he knew Prince Gorchakov, he could quite conceive the thought to be in his mind. Prince Gorchakov was now too old to go in for conquest, he had no such ambition, but he would delight in a repetition of his Black Sea policy to recover by diplomatic skill what the Treaty of Paris had taken from Russia in 1856.

Prince Bismarck then went on to say that his reason for wishing a frank and frequent exchange of ideas with H.M.G. on the Eastern Question resulted from his conviction that England and Germany were the two Powers best able to prevent mischief if things took a threatening turn.

Austria and Russia, and even France and Italy had special interests in the East about which they might some day quarrel, whilst Germany had none. England had a legitimate right to the road to India, which Germany cordially supported, and both wished for nothing but peace in the East, and so he believed that England and Germany were the two Powers naturally called upon to keep order among those whose interests were special and conflicting.

To prevent war, there were in his opinion two ways of dealing with the Eastern Question.

The first was that all the Powers should agree as long as possible to work cordially together to maintain the territorial *status quo* as they are now doing honestly, sincerely and he hoped successfully.

But circumstances might arise in Turkey unfavourable to a maintenance of our present peace policy. If the insurrection continued Montenegro might claim more territory with access to the sea, or union with Servia. Russia might support these pretensions and Austria oppose them, and other dangerous questions might ensue to which even the combined influence of England and Germany might not find a pacific solution.

If then peace became impossible without territorial modifica-

tions, the second way of dealing with the Eastern Question might come into operation.

It consisted equally in agreeing and working cordially together to maintain the peace of Europe not by upholding the territorial *status quo* but by amicably settling what should be done with Turkey to satisfy the Powers concerned, instead of going to war about it.

He would be the last man to stand in the way of any reasonable arrangement that would secure the blessings of peace in Europe for a long series of years. He could do so with the better grace since Germany, being territorially saturated, had nothing to claim in return from her neighbours but peace and goodwill for her services. Indeed, he would not even allow dynastic interests to interfere, and he would recall Prince Charles of Hohenzollern from Rumania if his presence stood in the way of any really desirable pacific settlement.

To obtain the friendly co-operation of France in a pacific settlement of the Eastern Question as also that of Italy, he would gladly with the consent of H.M.G. meet their wishes half way, whatever they were.

These were, generally speaking, his present ideas on the Eastern Question subject to confidential discussion with H.M.G. if things went wrong, and the Bosnian insurrection was not crushed before next spring.

I thanked Prince Bismarck for the frankness with which he had communicated his views to me and asked whether he could specify in what manner his allies would want to deal with European Turkey if things came to the worst.

He said he could not nor would he raise so delicate and so dangerous a subject by inquiry before its discussion became unavoidable.

I asked whether Germany would not object to Russia holding the mouths of the Danube.

Prince Bismarck said that Germany could afford to be indifferent to any territorial arrangement in E. Turkey so long as her friends were satisfied and peace secured. All he wanted at present was the power to communicate freely and frankly with Your Lordship when he saw rocks ahead, and the assurance that he might reckon on the co-operation of H.M.G. in trying to steer clear of them.

The impression left on my mind by this conversation is that Prince Bismarck has no positive or fixed plan of action yet in his mind, but wishes to be prepared for any contingency, as he rather

dreads too great an intimacy between Russia and Austria which might isolate Germany in regard to Eastern affairs.

I shall not fail to invite Prince Bismarck's further confidence and endeavour to ascertain his intentions and ideas on these grave questions, whenever a favourable opportunity enables me to do so. . . ."

Despite Lord Odo Russell's pious resolve, no further conversations seem to have taken place—neither side showed any real enthusiasm for "a frank and cordial understanding" and the whole idea faded into thin air until Russell wrote "as if it were something that had happened in a dream."<sup>1</sup> One explanation offers itself. Bismarck, hoping that the Suez Canal meant that Disraeli was prepared to take an active part in the East, and realizing the strength of his position if he had definite plans, was ready to follow his lead as the wisest policy to pursue in view of the precarious position of Andrassy and his own chagrin at Gorchakov, but when he found there was no such policy to support he decided to leave the matter in the air for the time being and see what Austria and Russia would do.

Over a month passed by. Shuvalov, passing through Berlin on his way from Petersburg to London, gave Lord Odo Russell the benefit of his impressions. He took a far graver view of Turkey's administrative and financial situation than Lord Derby, though he admitted that the Foreign Secretary had not committed himself to any very clear-cut view. Bismarck he had found uninterested in the fate of Turkey, but supremely anxious for peace. He had told him that he would support any proposal which Russia in concert with Europe might make, so long as he was not involved in a quarrel with Austria, and had added that no change in the *status quo* could be entertained without the acquiescence of England. The Emperor he had found fully convinced that the Turkish Empire must soon fall apart "from want of vital and adhesive power."

He himself thought the time ripe for concerted action. "Russia," he said, "declines once for all to take or accept any portion of Turkey for herself, nor could she allow certain territories to be taken from her by any other Power." This was the basis on which Russia was prepared to negotiate, but he admitted

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 23.

that this was his own personal conviction, and he could not answer for Gorchakov's policy.<sup>1</sup>

Hearing a mysterious hint that the Tsar might abdicate, owing to his health, and wishing to find out what impression Shuvalov had made on Bismarck, Lord Odo Russell called on the Chancellor. He found Bismarck in an enthusiastic frame of mind. He confided to his visitor that he would gladly see Shuvalov replace Gorchakov as Chancellor, and that he had convinced him that Turkey alone could not cope with the situation, and that the Powers would have to step in. But Shuvalov had convinced Bismarck of something else. He had proved to him that the question could not be settled without territorial modifications, and Bismarck declared to the astonished Ambassador that "the administrative powers of the Turkish Government were declining and their financial resources diminishing, so that the Sultan would gradually require more and more support on the part of the protecting Powers and that he was therefore sincerely glad to learn from Count Shuvalov that the Russian Government would, in his opinion, view without jealousy and give a cordial assent to an Austrian occupation of these provinces whenever it became evident that the Turkish Government could no longer administer them without the material assistance of a neighbouring and friendly Power."

Lord Odo Russell was dumbfounded. He protested that so far as he knew Austria's policy did not involve the occupation of any part of Turkey, and that he heard it spoken of with the greatest surprise. Bismarck, obviously trying to recede a little, agreed that Russell had accurately described Austria's policy, but given continual disturbances on the one hand and increasing impotence on the other, the only possible solution was Austrian intervention sooner or later. "It would be the inevitable end of the decline of the Turkish Empire in Europe."

Lord Odo took pains to give Bismarck no excuse for thinking that such a solution would for one moment commend itself to Great Britain, and even though Bismarck confronted him with the views expressed in the *Times* he reminded him that these views would not necessarily be endorsed by the British people as expressed in Parliament. Bismarck replied that the matter was by no means urgent and that there was time for reflection. Then the conversa-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 851. No. 137. To Lord Derby. Secret. 28 March 1876.

tion turned on other things.<sup>1</sup> It seems more than probable that Disraeli was referring to this proposition in his letter of 20 April, when he wrote, "Although I am not very surprised at the position of Turkish affairs, I confess there is something cynical about G's treatment which I think is not exactly respectful to us after his representations. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Henceforth Bismarck showed plainly that he had no desire to exchange views with Lord Odo Russell. Day by day the situation grew graver as Montenegro showed signs of war-like preparations, but Bismarck and Bülow, both "unfortunately unwell," refused to be interviewed, and information had to be sought from unofficial sources. Russell heard that if Montenegro were attacked "Russia could no longer be responsible for or insist on the neutrality of Serbia," while Germany would probably make no move but await information from Austria and Russia.<sup>3</sup>

As April wore on the acute tension was aggravated by the attitude of the high command. The Austrian Ambassador confided to Lord Odo Russell that he heard on good authority that as a result of the condemnation of a certain Lieutenant Erth for selling secret information to foreign military attachés the Emperor had issued a decree to be read secretly in all barracks. Officers were commanded not only to observe the greatest secrecy and to discourage foreign officers from attending parades and manœuvres, but were even discouraged from making the acquaintance of foreign military attachés and were absolutely prohibited from giving them any information on any subject about which they might be inquiring.

The Andrassy Note had not been adequate to deal with the situation. Anything and everything might happen. Austria and Russia adopted the attitude that they must go to work on the basis of the previous note and on that principle support the insurgents and invite them to approach the Turkish Government. To that end a conference was to take place in Berlin.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 851. No. 145. To Lord Derby Secret. 5 April 1876.

<sup>2</sup>*Disraeli* VI. 23.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 851. No. 171. To Lord Derby. 23 April 1876.

## CHAPTER VII

### EUROPE AT CROSS PURPOSES

[1876]

*We must beware lest exhaustion is left to accomplish what good sense has failed to do.*

*The Berlin Memorandum*—arrival of Gorchakov and Andrassy—the secret conferences—presentation of the memorandum—interview between Russell and Gorchakov—inaccessibility of Bismarck—Bülow's views—Lord Odo's report—Disraeli and the memorandum—Lord Odo Russell's dismay at the thought of rejection—Disraeli's annoyance with him—Bismarck's attitude—the Memorandum Andrassy's not Gorchakov's—Disraeli's delusion.

*After the Rejection*—serious developments in the Balkans—German fear of Anglo-French entente—murder of the consuls—Lord Odo Russell in England—interview with the Queen—Disraeli's naive Memorandum—interview between Russell and Bismarck at Kissingen—Germany's demands on the Salonica incident—Derby's attitude towards suggested conference—Russell on leave—Disraeli's petulance—sudden desire for understanding with Russia and German support—return of Russell to Berlin—his summary of the situation—Bismarck in retirement—his anxiety to know England's policy—Lord Tenterden's view—the armistice question—Bismarck's decision in Russia's favour—Disraeli's apprehensions—Bismarck's unfavourable impression of English policy—Lord Odo Russell's comments on the situation as it stood in October 1876.

#### I

ON 1 May 1876 Lord Odo Russell telegraphed to Lord Derby the confidential information that Gorchakov had invited Andrassy to meet him in Berlin on 11 May to hold a conference with Prince Bismarck on Eastern affairs. The following day Bülow said he had not heard whether the invitation would be accepted, denied knowledge of any "conference," and said further that Gorchakov merely thought the opportunity convenient for an exchange of views of the three ministers on the



suppression of the rebellion. There was evidently no desire to be forthcoming with Great Britain, but within three days Russell was able to report that Bismarck had actually sent the invitation to Andrassy as Gorchakov had desired, that Andrassy was expected in Berlin on the following Tuesday and Gorchakov on the Thursday. They would remain in Berlin until 13 May. Bülow, rather more communicative than before, told him that the basis of discussion would be the Andrassy Note. The conference would reveal the plans of the two statesmen, while the German Government, "having no special interest beyond the maintenance of peace in the latter, would be willing and glad to give their moral support to any pacific solution of the question their Russian and Austrian allies might agree upon."<sup>1</sup>

Andrassy, accompanied by a large staff of secretaries, arrived first, had interviews almost immediately with Bismarck and the Emperor and dined with the Chancellor afterwards. Both statesmen declared themselves "entirely ignorant of Gorchakov's intentions, proposals and policy." Soon after the Tsar and his minister arrived, Novikov having been already summoned to Berlin, the imperial party was met at the station by the Emperor and members of his family. After a dinner at the palace for the Tsar, and at the Foreign Office for the ministers, the secret conferences began and were continued on the following day. On 12 May there was another dinner at court for the ministers and their staffs. Up to this time all the other ambassadors were completely in the dark as to what was going on, but the mystery was to be dispelled on the following day. By the invitation of Bismarck the ambassadors assembled at his house to hear what had been decided. They listened to the fateful resolutions on which the issues of European war or peace might depend, heard the appeals of the three statesmen for co-operation, received copies of the Memorandum and hastened away to report to their respective governments.

*To Lord Derby.* 13 May 1876.—

"... Baron Jomini was then invited to read the enclosed document to us, and the proposal to which they solicit the co-operation of the other great Powers.

On receiving a copy of this document for transmission to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 852. No. 188. To Lord Derby. 5 May 1876.

Your Lordship, I said that in the absence of special instructions I did so *ad referendum*.

Prince Gorchakov observed that he and Count Andrassy would remain till Monday in Berlin and that they hoped the Governments of England, France and Italy would be able to express an opinion on the telegraphic summary of their proposals before they left. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

It was now already Saturday afternoon.

Now that the need for secrecy was over both Gorchakov and Andrassy asked Lord Odo Russell "privately and separately" to come and see them on the following day. He saw Andrassy first at the Austrian Embassy who evidently wanted to discuss his last telegrams from Count Zichy, which he held in his hand. They tallied with Lord Odo's information as derived from Sir Henry Elliot, in fact one of them explicitly stated that he entirely agreed with his English colleague, and thought Ignatiev's views "exaggerated and personal." Andrassy disclosed his own opinion that Ignatyev's spirit of intrigue was a mischievous influence and assured Lord Odo Russell that he had gone so far as to propose to Prince Gorchakov a mutual withdrawal of ambassadors, but that he had not been met half-way and had been obliged to let the matter drop, without in the least changing his opinion that Ignatyev's presence complicated matters at Constantinople. He said that Ignatyev had never forgiven him for refusing to receive him as ambassador and for asking for Novikov, "who was an honest, truthful agent with whom he was able to entertain the most intimate and satisfactory relations, instead."

There was nothing new in the views he then unfolded on the insurrection, the weakness of Turkey and the Greek king's secret pretensions. Then the Memorandum was discussed. By this time Lord Odo Russell had had time to study it and it presented grave difficulties to his mind. He agreed that England would always be found on the side of peace and ready to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Empire but he would like to know the precise implication of the last sentence, which seemed to contemplate sanctions if the armistice expired before the desired result was brought about.

<sup>1</sup>This must have been the famous telegram for which the Queen and Disraeli waited in vain. *Disraeli* VI. 23. See also *D.D.F.* II. p.59.

"It simply meant that if the proposed measures failed others would become necessary."

"What measures?" asked Lord Odo Russell.

After a slightly embarrassed silence Andrassy made a non-committal reply. "Circumstances might so alter the situation of affairs that it was impossible to foretell what measures might be thought necessary by the guaranteeing Powers two months hence—he therefore preferred not to enter upon conjectures and speculations for the present."

With this answer fresh in his mind Russell made his way to the Russian Embassy. Gorchakov, beaming with his wonted "benevolent friendliness," was also surrounded by telegrams from Constantinople, this time from the suspected Ignatyev. They gave a sensational picture of recent events and a vivid warning of Russia in Turkey. Gorchakov clearly believed in his ambassador. "Turkey was a powder magazine, which a spark might blow up. Anything and everything might happen at Constantinople, and we must be prepared for surprises. . . . We stood before the unknown, and the united action, based on a cordial and intimate understanding and agreement of the great Powers alone could save Turkey from crashing to pieces. No doubt all that could be done was a mere replastering, but if it made the edifice last a few years longer our efforts would be well repaid. For this reason he attached the greatest importance to the support of England and the other great Powers, France and Italy. He had all along insisted on an *entente à six et pas seulement à trois*, and then lowering his voice, added, "More so than my allies, who do not see the importance of it as I do."

This was his tone throughout the interview. His object seemed to be to impress Lord Odo Russell with the serious state of affairs and to convince him of the necessity of supporting the Memorandum. He interpreted the last article as meaning "measures to be concerted by all the guaranteeing Powers according to the requirements of the moment. A measure for instance which had occurred to him as useful would be to station ships in all the ports of Turkey and agree that in the event of the Turkish authorities demanding assistance against an outburst of fanaticism, a portion of the crew should be allowed to land to support the authority of the Turkish governors in case of need. The ships of all nations would become temples of refuge for the

persecuted Christians of the East, sailing under the Red Cross of Geneva.

"Time of course would show what was required. What he asked for was unity in thought and purpose on the part of the six guaranteeing Powers so as to compel the Turkish Government to do what was necessary for their own salvation."

This verbose explanation meant as much and as little as Andrassy's and left Russell just where he was before, nor did the rest of the conversation prove any more enlightening. Gorchakov told him that "he was not a pan-Slavist, which was a republican idea, but a Russian, which was the embodiment of peace, progress and order."

Though he had seen Gorchakov and Andrassy, Lord Odo Russell could not secure an audience with Bismarck, but had to content himself with an interview with Bülow instead. Bülow emphasized Germany's great confidence in Andrassy's knowledge and belief in the final if slow efficacy of his practical suggestions. He told Russell that the co-operation of France and Italy was already promised and hoped "most anxiously and sincerely" for that of Britain. He announced that a part of the German fleet was destined for Salonica and a second gun-boat for Constantinople in case of need. "The Memorandum meant that the Northern Powers would invite the other great Powers to a general conference to discuss the best means of giving renewed vitality to the Turkish Empire and of improving the condition of the Christians in the Herzegovina."<sup>1</sup>

Leaving the German Embassy, Lord Odo Russell immediately proceeded to his own. Here he wrote a full account of his conversations, added all he had been able to find out from other sources, and despatched Mr. Macdonell on a special mission to London. He had already telegraphed the adhesion of France and Italy. The prevailing impression in Berlin was that Gorchakov had come prepared with a plan of his own, which was entirely unacceptable to Germany and Austria, for Bismarck and Andrassy had previously arranged to resist any policy whatever suggested by Ignatyev. Of this abortive plan nothing whatever was known, but it was certain he had expected the conference to last longer and to be of wider scope; he had sent for Novikov and a secretary from Vienna, for M. Wassilitz, the Herzegovina agent, for

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 852. No. 209. To Lord Derby. Secret. 15 May 1876.

the Russian Consul-General from Ragusa, for Senator Petrović from Montenegro and for several cabinet messengers to await his orders in Berlin. But "Novikov found nothing to do, Wassilitz was never consulted, the Consul-General arrived too late and the senator Petrović was telegraphed to remain in Vienna. Of the messengers, only one was sent to Constantinople." Bismarck was not once mentioned either by Gorchakov, or, what is more surprising, by Andrassy. Lord Odo Russell did not fail to notice this, nor to observe how exceedingly reserved and serious he was during the whole meeting.

In contrast to Lord Odo Russell's display of week-end energy, Lord Derby merely telegraphed that the Government could not make a decision until the Cabinet had met on the following Tuesday. Andrassy and Gorchakov did not remain in Berlin for the reply, but asked that it might be communicated to them through Bismarck. The Memorandum did not commend itself to Disraeli. Lord Odo's despatches, though diplomatically faultless, could not disguise the fact that Britain was playing a minor part, and the Prime Minister's arguments were strong enough to give pause to the Queen, who was not at first inclined to take offence at the three Northern Powers' acting among themselves. She thought this attitude sufficiently explained because they were "more intimately and more vitally interested" than either England, France or Italy,<sup>1</sup> and was greatly concerned lest the Porte should be encouraged by England's separating herself from the other Powers to look to her for help and thus "precipitate rather than prevent the catastrophe."<sup>2</sup> But Disraeli thought otherwise. Ever since he had realized that the three Northern Powers were going to steer the European ship without consulting England he had begun to doubt the wisdom of ignoring "Bismarck's overtures," but if it were too late to remedy this, there was yet the possibility of preventing the ship from sailing at all. Having found five excellent reasons for doing this, he had little difficulty in persuading a unanimous, if not too well-informed cabinet, to reject the Berlin Memorandum.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Odo Russell, who had suffered more than any one else from the awkward situation, and who had not failed to point out

<sup>1</sup>I must confess I am surprised that the Queen thought that Germany was more interested in any part of the Turkish Empire than Great Britain.

<sup>2</sup>*Q.V.* II. 453.

<sup>3</sup>*Q.V.* II. 453.

the ambiguities in the Memorandum, was nevertheless astounded at its absolute rejection. He telegraphed for instructions; "Am I to communicate rejection by H.M. Government of the plan put forward by the three Powers officially to the German Government?" "The consequences may be very serious."<sup>1</sup>

The consequences that looked very serious in Berlin were lightly regarded by Disraeli. Lord Odo Russell, asked to be more explicit, summarized his forebodings in no uncertain terms.

*To Lord Derby.* 18 May 1876.<sup>2</sup>—

"... The difficulty of supporting with success a policy of resistance or inaction.

The more energetic action in Turkey it may in consequence necessitate on the part of the three Powers.

The tendency it may thereby create to hasten on events it would appear desirable to postpone in the East.

The alarm it will produce in the commercial world."

Disraeli, however, was in no mood to listen to any suggestions from Lord Odo Russell. Rumours had reached him from Vienna that he had expressed the opinion that "the proposals of the conference would meet the views of H.M.G." Disraeli allowed the trifling incident to prey absurdly on his mind, calling it an "unheard of step."<sup>3</sup> Russell himself did not even hear of the rumour until 2 June, when Sir Andrew Buchanan mentioned in a private letter that Andrassy had excused the request for an immediate telegraphic reply on the strength of this alleged remark. By this time all the Ambassador could recollect was accepting the Memorandum *ad referendum*, and he asked Lord Derby for fuller particulars. "I was particularly careful," he wrote, "not to express any personal opinion, or to commit H.M.G. one way or the other during the conference, which I was the first to leave as soon as it was over."<sup>4</sup> What Lord Odo Russell does seem to have done was to make an incidental remark to Gorchakov which Andrassy perhaps took too much in earnest. According to Gontaut-Biron he said that being without instructions he could only take it *ad referendum* and that he would

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 852. Telegram. To Lord Derby. 16 May 1876. (11 p.m. received at midnight).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 28.

F.O. 64. 853. No. 265. To Lord Derby. 9 June 1876.

immediately communicate it to the British Government, and then, in reply to an observation of Gorchakov's that he hoped they could count on the approval of Lord Derby, Lord Odo Russell replied that he believed in fact that this approval would be given.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Derby, who did not attach the same importance to the matter as his chief, one way or the other, sent a soothing reply to Berlin. As regards Disraeli, doubts of his own policy, the suspense of the past week, the apathy of the Foreign Office, the strain of convincing the Queen and the indifferent state of his own health may have been the background against which this little episode attained such magnified proportions.

He read through Lord Odo Russell's objections to his policy, and found nothing significant in them. As he saw it, the result of his own policy would be that Turkey, so far from being encouraged in the belief that she could rely on Britain to prop up her failing power, would realize that she must follow the directions of the British Government "without cavil." While Lord Odo apparently saw in the future another Crimean War, Disraeli saw nothing more alarming than a conference.<sup>2</sup> Reluctantly the Queen allowed herself to be convinced, but reiterated her wish that every attempt must be made to secure a conference and convince both the Porte and other Powers that Turkey was not advised by England to refuse to accept the Memorandum. She could not understand why the fleet was being so much strengthened in the Dardanelles, but Disraeli pointed out to her that Germany was about to send an iron-clad squadron, a gun-boat and a corvette to Salonica, and a further gun-boat to Constantinople to protect German interests in Turkey. He played cleverly on her anti-Russian prejudice by reminding her that one of the consequences of sanctioning the Memorandum would have been the garrisoning of Constantinople by Russia and the placing of the Turkish fleet under Russian protection. He followed this up by telling her that a friendly representation was to be made to the Powers that England intended to observe strictly the treaties of 1841 and 1856.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* II. p.59.

<sup>2</sup>"... Nothing must be hurried, and, before the Congress meets, the policy of England should be decided, and the same..." *Q.V.* II. 454.

<sup>3</sup>*Q.V.* II. 455-6.

Bismarck took the rejection quite calmly, showing a certain academic regret, but saying that he was sure H.M. Government would do nothing to encourage the Turks to resist.<sup>1</sup> A few days later he expressed himself rather more fully.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 26 May 1876.<sup>2</sup>—

“... No one could contest the right of England to follow the course best calculated to serve her interests,—and as to Germany, her interests would not be affected by the ultimate fate of Turkey, but Germany, like England, as Your Lordship said, was interested in the maintenance of peace—and peace, as matters now stood, depended on the continuance of the friendly understanding existing between Austria and Russia which the general concert of the six great Powers tended to confirm and consolidate, but which the withdrawal of the support of England might weaken and disturb.

Russia was better prepared than Austria to bear the consequences of a quarrel, whilst Austria was not in a condition to stand a conflict with Russia without serious damage to herself.

If a difference of opinion arose between them, the position of Germany would become extremely difficult—with every wish for a neutral position, Germany might be compelled in her efforts to maintain peace to take the part of either Russia or Austria, and then would come the moment when the moral support of England might be advantageously put forward in the interests of peace. For this reason, he welcomed the proffered co-operation of H.M.G. and tendered his thanks to Your Lordship for the message I had conveyed to him.

He regretted that Your Lordship had not, in January last when he invited an understanding on Eastern affairs initiated some more detailed line of policy, but he thought that the present situation might even facilitate an agreement as to what was really wanted for the preservation of peace in case of danger.

In the first instance he could not but hope that H.M.G. might be able to lend their moral support to Austria because he looked on the independence and strength of Austria as essential to the peace of Europe.

Count Andrassy, who was the author of the Memorandum of 13 May, had sustained a severe defeat by the refusal of H.M.G. to support the proposals of the Berlin conference.

The traditional policy of England was favourable to Andrassy

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 852. No. 219. To Lord Derby. 18 May 1876.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 235.



and he had no doubt it would continue so—he therefore also hoped that Count Andrassy would, if unduly pressed by Russia, receive some support and encouragement at Your Lordship's hands, Count Andrassy needed it and deserved it, and (to use Prince Bismarck's own words) 'it would be kind and useful to pat him on the back, and send him a few soothing telegrams.'

In reply to a question of mine, Prince Bismarck said that Prince Gorchakov had a broader plan for the pacification of European Turkey, which Count Andrassy had firmly opposed from the outset, and that he had carried his point after a long discussion with the Tsar against the Russian Chancellor, an achievement he might well be proud of. Prince Gorchakov had then yielded and promised his support to the Memorandum dictated by Count Andrassy to Baron Jomini and submitted to the governments of England, France and Italy for their consideration.

I asked if it was true that Prince Gorchakov had recommended a foreign occupation of the Herzegovina. Prince Bismarck replied that he had not, that his plan was, on the contrary, based on the establishment of the autonomy of the revolted provinces under Turkish governors, which Count Andrassy entirely declined to consent to. The refusal of H.M.G. to support the Berlin Conference at Constantinople was therefore a severer blow to Count Andrassy than to Prince Gorchakov.

As to the proposals themselves, he did not deny that they might be open both to objection and improvement, but he supported them because they kept up, continued and cemented the good understanding between Austria and Russia to which he attached greater importance than to anything else in this question.

He regretted H.M.G. could not support the other five Powers in recommending an armistice at Constantinople but H.M.G. would always find him ready to consider and support any better proposals they thought more likely to bring about the pacification of European Turkey and to secure the maintenance of peace in general. . . ."

The Emperor William was also very regretful, not that he considered himself qualified to judge the reasons which had led to Great Britain's attitude, but because he attached the highest importance to the co-operation of England.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 27 May 1876.<sup>1</sup>—

"... He would tell me in strict confidence that he did not expect the efforts of the five Powers could galvanize a dead body into life again, but he thought it the advantage of all concerned to put off the funeral as long as possible. The secret of the question, which no one could venture to allude to was after all the possession of Constantinople, and he had received the most positive assurances from the Emperor Nicholas at the time of the Crimean War and from the Emperor Alexander the other day, that Russia did not want Constantinople and would not know what to do with it if they had it. In fact the possession of Constantinople would break the Russian Empire into two halves to use the Tsar's own expression.

It was the manifest interest of Russia to keep the Turkish Empire together as long as possible and in that view he fully agreed with the Emperor Alexander.

I explained the position of H.M.G. to the Emperor and said that H.M. would find that there was more vitality and power of resistance in the Turkish Empire than was generally believed in Germany."

So far all comment had been centred on the actual content of the Memorandum, but there was a great deal of talk about the procedure that had been adopted in Berlin, and H.M. Government took a sufficiently serious view of the matter to instruct Lord Odo Russell to make representations as to the inconvenience that the method of a discussion *à trois* to be followed by an agreement *à six* had caused both in the case of the Andrassy Note and in the present instance. At the same time Russell was careful to keep the two points separate—the Memorandum had been rejected on its merits, and not because of the unacceptable manner of its presentation.

*To Lord Derby.* Confidential. 27 May 1876.—<sup>2</sup>

"... I have thought the more desirable to offer these remarks in general conversation, because an erroneous and somewhat childish impression had gone abroad that H.M.G. had taken offence at not having been consulted in the first instance or invited to take part in the conferences which H.M.G. it is con-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 852. No. 235.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 852. No. 236.

cluded, desires to see transferred at some future period from Berlin to London.

This impression, I am happy to say, has, however, not been shared or credited by the German Government. In talking on the subject with Herr v. Bülow, His Excellency reminded me that the Berlin meeting proposed by Russia—agreed to by Germany and accepted by Austria had been considered as a preliminary discussion only, to enable the two governments more directly interested to agree on the measures best calculated in their opinion to bring about the pacification of the Herzegovina.

As soon as an agreement had been established, it was submitted by the three Powers to the consideration of the Governments of England, France and Italy, and in framing their proposals they had been guided by a sincere desire to adopt only such recommendations as could meet, to the best of their belief, with the assent and support of all the Powers concerned.

It was the wish and intention of the Northern Powers thereby to afford every opportunity to the Governments of England, France and Italy for the consideration of the proposals submitted to them and for the expression of objections and suggestions which Germany and her allies would gladly receive and take into earnest consideration themselves with the hope of acquiring the support and co-operation of H.M.G. in the work of pacification."

This little group of despatches infuriated Disraeli. He wrote to Lord Derby, "I do not like Lord Odo's letter, or anything, so far as I can gather, that he has done . . . he does not seem even now to comprehend the situation. I have myself no doubt that, if we are stiff, we shall gain all our points, because no one is really averse to them, except Russia."<sup>1</sup> But Disraeli's own attitude is open to the criticism that, while rejecting the Memorandum, he had nothing constructive to propose, and such an attitude could only be justified on the assumption that there was in fact no crisis in the Balkans. A blank refusal to co-operate could do nothing to bring to an end an intolerable situation, and leads to a suspicion that he not only failed to understand the problem in all its complications—that would have been forgivable—but that he was angry at any suggestion that that particular problem existed at all; for his mind was set upon solving quite a

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 28.

different one, the extinction of the understanding between the three Emperors. He hated the alliance, and fondly believed that his action had destroyed it. He saw no danger in his policy whatever. So far from tending towards war, he declared it would preserve peace. Determined to make Britain felt in the councils of Europe, he flattered himself that he had done so.<sup>1</sup> The determination was commendable, but what contribution had he to make for the one he had rejected? Here was his opportunity; Bismarck had again offered his support, but Disraeli had no suggestion to make. Further, in thinking that he had destroyed the Continental understanding, Disraeli deceived himself, he had only driven it underground. Reichstadt was the answer to the failure at Berlin, and all Lord Odo Russell's forebodings were to be only too soon fulfilled.

## II

The events of May 1876 had created a new problem without solving any of the old ones, and these were developing with alarming rapidity. During the month French and German consuls were murdered at Salonica, Abdul Aziz was deposed and replaced by Murad his nephew, supported by Midhat Pasha. The change of government, though it afforded a convenient opportunity for the withdrawal of the Memorandum of unfortunate conception, had no effect on the rebellion, and by the end of June, Serbia and Montenegro had declared war in sympathy with the insurgents. One evil result of the divided counsels of Europe was that the unhappy Christians of Bulgaria, deprived of even the nominal protection once afforded by Russia, were now exposed, not only to the ordinary fate of rebels, but to atrocities which appeared to stir the conscience of all Britain with the exception of Disraeli.

Although he did not wish to believe it, the Berlin Memorandum did not represent Gorchakov's views but Andrassy's, and the Russian Chancellor now began to put forth feelers for a conference at which his own suggestions might be considered.

<sup>1</sup>Q.V. II. 458.

Lord Odo Russell gathered that these suggestions included a system of autonomy, and that articles in the *Times*, and the *Spectator* encouraged him to believe that he could rely on British support.<sup>1</sup> But immediately after this the *Times* came out with another article, vaguely proposing that England and France together should make known their idea of pacification to the three Northern Powers. Bismarck became nervous. He saw himself confronted with the possibility of a revived Anglo-French alliance, in opposition to the *Drei-Kaiser-Bund*, and when Disraeli's statement that Russia would not be allowed to tear up the Treaty of Paris with impunity was published in the same paper, he was still less reassured. So serious did the situation appear that the Emperor put off his departure for Ems, where he was to spend a few days with the Tsar, and he only started on his journey after Lord Odo Russell had convinced Bismarck that despite the statements in the *Times* the British Government were not contemplating a Western alliance.<sup>2</sup>

With this denial, diplomacy seemed for the moment at a standstill, and by the end of June, practically the whole diplomatic body had left Berlin, Bismarck's last message to Russell being a suggestion that the Government might co-operate in bringing the Salonica murderers to justice. Bismarck's ideas of justice included the execution of the Vice-Governor and the Colonel at Salonica.<sup>3</sup> Lord Odo Russell was about to proceed to England, but before doing so communicated to Radowitz the representations H.M. Government had made to the Porte. On 25 June Russell left Berlin and was absent until 15 July.

He saw the Queen on 5 July, and found her already acquainted by the Crown Princess with the fact that Bismarck wanted England to take the lead and was ready to back her up if she did so.<sup>4</sup> He endorsed all she had written, and repeated what Disraeli had said to Derby that "they had hardly taken sufficient advantage of Bismarck's overtures in the winter." But except for this the events of May had left a very different impression on his mind. Where Disraeli saw a deliberate attempt on the part of the three Northern Powers to exclude England from the European

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 852. Tel. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 5 June 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 853. No. 263. Most Confidential. 8 June 1876.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 275. Confidential. 13 June 1876.

<sup>4</sup>Q.V. II. 464.

concert, Lord Odo Russell felt it his duty to point out to the Queen that it was the logical outcome of England's own policy during the past years, "which had really made it appear as though England would never hold her old place again," and that in reality "Bismarck was amazed and gratified by Mr. Disraeli's wonderful quickness and his large views on foreign affairs."<sup>1</sup> If Lord Odo Russell, like Bismarck, was still hoping that Disraeli had an alternative policy, this leave must have proved a great disappointment to him. There is nothing to show that the Prime Minister had anything to say to him during his stay in England, and Russell seems to have returned to Berlin without any definite instructions or information. Indeed, Disraeli's view of the real state of affairs, as expressed in a memorandum which the Queen laid before the Tsar at his request was naïve to a degree, for with the Treaty of Reichstadt already signed, the Tsar could afford to smile at its patronising advice.<sup>2</sup>

On his way back to Berlin, Lord Odo Russell met Bismarck at Kissingen. He found him in one of his nervous moods, full of the apprehensions he said the Emperor entertained for some reason that Britain was about to attack Russia. The Tsar had wanted him to send a note of remonstrance. This he had refused to do, saying that he would rather resign, and he begged Lord Odo to speak to the Emperor. Russell lost no time in having a serious conversation with the Emperor, and was apparently successful in allaying his suspicions, but it was a curious little incident.<sup>3</sup>

While Lord Odo Russell had been away energetic representations on the part of Bismarck had brought about some satisfaction of the German claims with regard to the Salonica outrages, but Germany was now making the further claim that a written promise should be given that the governor should never again receive employment. No delay would be tolerated in the payment of compensation to the widows, and an ultimatum had been sent

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* 467.

<sup>2</sup>"... That the *six* Powers may have perhaps interfered in the affairs of Turkey a little too hastily—prematurely perhaps—but the course of events extricated them from a difficult position and induced them to fall back on the principle of non-interference. The consequence is general neutrality, which Your Majesty trusts will be strictly observed by all, so that if it be necessary hereafter for the Powers to take any steps, there may be a complete understanding between them." *Q.V.* II. 469.

<sup>3</sup>*Q.V.* II. 472.

demanding full satisfaction before 12 o'clock on 4 August, the only concession being that Germany would accept the crown jewels as security.<sup>1</sup>

On 31 July Disraeli made his famous "coffee-house babble" speech. Eleven days before Lord Odo Russell had reported: "I regret to say that the information received by the German Government confirms the reports respecting the atrocities committed by the Turks in Bulgaria. Count Münster has been instructed to communicate with Your Lordship on the subject."<sup>2</sup>

These despicable atrocities and the defeat of Serbia were creating a situation so grave that all Disraeli's illtimed scepticism could not explain it away. Bismarck was ready to support any constructive proposals that we might make. Russia still hankered after a conference, but Lord Derby could not see that anything more than a local commission was necessary. The conference idea, according to Shuvalov, failed to find British support owing to the very real difficulty of finding a representative. Lord Odo Russell, the obvious person, was just at the moment out of favour with Disraeli because of the Berlin Memorandum, and because he was a Liberal. ". . . It would be a blow to the Conservatives to be reduced to confide this cause to him. Lord Derby would not hear of leaving England himself."<sup>3</sup> The meeting place was likewise a difficulty. London was suggested, but Shuvalov said: "If London, why not St. Petersburg?"

It was impossible for things to go on for ever as they were, and even Lord Derby was moved to instruct Sir Henry Elliot to inform the Porte that the Powers would be obliged to interfere if firm measures were not taken to stop massacres. At the same time he did not define what form interference would take. Russia, while expressing willingness to co-operate, not unnaturally wanted Derby to be a little more specific as to what he meant by "interference."<sup>4</sup> This was the situation when Lord Odo Russell left Berlin for his summer leave.

Public indignation at the atrocities was growing in England, and Serbia was meeting with such disastrous defeats that Disraeli was haunted by the fear that Russia might intervene at any

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 853. No. 339. To Lord Derby. Very Confidential. 4 August 1876.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 320. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 20 July 1876.

<sup>3</sup>Russian Documents printed in *Slavonic Review*. IV. 180.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*

moment. Derby, indeed, had already protested to Shuvalov that Russian volunteers were receiving official recognition.<sup>1</sup> These considerations made him modify his policy. In May he had objected even to the moderate proposals of the Berlin Memorandum, now he was prepared to press for an armistice and for a policy of local self-government. An armistice had already been proposed by Russia, who had coupled with it a suggestion for a conference. The rebels themselves and Serbia and Montenegro had suffered so terribly that Prince Nicholas was appealing to Andrassy for an intervention of the Powers. Lord Derby, seeing this desire to bring the conflict to an end, and influenced by public demonstrations, instructed Elliot to propose to Turkey a general armistice.<sup>2</sup> Now that Disraeli wanted to move, he acted with something less than his usual tact. With sublime disregard of the fact that Lord Odo Russell had himself deplored that so little notice had been taken of Bismarck's advances earlier in the year, he roundly abused the Ambassador to the Queen for neglect in not seeing Bismarck, and even for taking his usual leave. Two months before Disraeli had committed himself to the opinion that Turkish affairs would more or less settle themselves. These two months had been packed with misery and horror, and now in his anxiety to come to an understanding with Russia he had no difficulty in persuading himself that he had wished it all along. "... At this moment, for example, it is of importance that we should have an understanding with Russia, and Lord Derby and Lord Beaconsfield have, both of them, from the first, shaped their course with that end."<sup>3</sup>

In September 1876 Europe seems to have been far nearer the precipice of general war than she had ever been during the sensational days of May 1875. British public opinion was awake to the enormities of the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria, even if it was ignorant of the larger European issues and counter-currents that might so easily have involved her in a welter of slaughter. The Porte had contemptuously rejected the armistice proposal, as no more acceptable than the Berlin Memorandum, and though the British Government continued to press it, it was far more likely that the fire would spread than that it would be

<sup>1</sup>Russian Documents printed in *Slavonic Review*. IV. 182.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>*Q.V.* II. 477.



put out. So Lord Odo Russell returned to Berlin, bearing definite instructions this time to approach Bismarck, but Bismarck at this moment was fully pre-occupied with another complication.

Critical though the situation appeared in London, it assumed even graver proportions in Berlin, where the air was thick with rumours of a possible serious difference of opinion between Russia and Austria. The Chancellor was in retirement at Varzin—occupied with his own thoughts and absolutely inaccessible to any one. He was trying to read the future, for he had been thrown into a frenzy of anxiety by a request of the Tsar to know what Germany would do in the event of war between Russia and Austria. “. . . A war between Russia and Austria is an extraordinarily difficult and dangerous dilemma for us and for our future,” he wrote,<sup>1</sup> and the thought seemed to weigh on his mind far more than the state of Anglo-Russian relations. It is therefore not surprising that he was not prepared to make a statement of policy with regard to a Russian occupation of Turkish territory, which had been proposed in conjunction with an armistice of not less than a month.<sup>2</sup> The British Government itself refused this proposal<sup>3</sup> while the Sultan proceeded to promise a general scheme of reform.<sup>4</sup> Lord Odo Russell was instructed to inform Bülow that while H.M. Government were prepared to continue to press for an armistice of not less than a month, they could not approve of a Russian occupation of Turkish territory, nor of an entry into the Bosphorus of allied fleets. They thought the armistice should be immediately followed by a conference.<sup>5</sup>

Unable to get in touch with Bismarck, Lord Odo Russell availed himself of other sources of information so as to send his Government a full account of the position in Berlin. General Manteuffel had just returned from Russia, and Russell embodied his impressions of the significance of the visit in a despatch.

<sup>1</sup>*G.P.* II. p. 57.

<sup>2</sup>*F.O.* 64. 855. No. 421. To Lord Derby. Very Confidential. 1 October 1876.

<sup>3</sup>*Cecil: Lord Salisbury.* II. 88.

<sup>4</sup>*F.O.* 64. 855. No. 424. To Lord Derby. 4 October 1876.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* No. 431. 6 October 1876.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 7 October 1876.<sup>1</sup>—

“ . . . I learn on good authority that if a serious difference of opinion were to arise between Austria and Russia, the Emperor William’s sympathies would be in favour of supporting the Czar to whom he feels bound by family ties, by personal regard, and by gratitude for the moral support Russia gave Germany in the wars against Denmark, Austria and France.

After the meeting of the Emperors of Russia and Austria at Reichstadt, some suspicion arose in Bismarck’s mind that they had come to a secret agreement which was concealed from the German Government, and when later Prince Gorchakov proposed a conference—Prince Bismarck advised the Emperor William to decline the proposal. The Czar was so deeply offended at his uncle’s refusal that the Emperor regretted his decision and sought an excuse for an explanation which might lead to the re-establishment of cordial relations between them. He found one in the congratulatory mission of Fieldmarshal Count Manteuffel and entrusted him with a private letter to the Czar, the contents of which are not known, but the effects of which were all he could desire. . . .

It appears, however, that General Manteuffel, who is a devoted adherent of a Russian alliance, on returning from his mission, reported to the Emperor William and later proceeded to Varzin to report to Prince Bismarck that the impression he brought back from Russia was that, thanks to the cunning of Prince Gorchakov and to the intrigues of Count Shuvalov, a practical and cordial understanding between Russia and England would be brought about which might some day prove inconvenient in its effects to Germany and he strongly urged his imperial master and the Chancellor to be on their guard lest other alliances should follow and separate them from their old and tried Russian friends on whom they had hitherto always been able to rely.

There can be no doubt that the Emperor William was much impressed by General Manteuffel’s views and advice, and that His Majesty’s sympathies are enlisted more than ever in favour of the Czar’s policy in Turkey. Besides which, the Emperor William dislikes the Emperor of Austria personally, and distrusts his policy, which has undergone so many different phases since 1849 and His Majesty, like Prince Bismarck, looks upon Count Andrassy as the only fixed friend Germany can trust in Austria.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 432.

What impression General Manteuffel's views may have made on Prince Bismarck nobody knows. He has shut himself up in Varzin, where he devotes himself to the management of his estate and to the prosecution of those among his tenants who will not pay their rent, and he avoids committing himself to any opinion on the political questions of the day beyond the general assurance that he will give his support to the maintenance of peace in Europe.

If in the coming negotiations Prince Bismarck should incline to support Austria against Russia he will have to sustain a conflict, as he has so often done before, with his imperial master, and it is probably for that reason that he is not favourable to the idea of a conference in which he will have to adopt a more distinct line of policy than he has hitherto done in European affairs."

This despatch may give the clue to the Emperor William's apprehensions a short time before, but it also gives the clue to another complication of the situation at this moment—while the Emperor much preferred his nephew, the Tsar, to the Emperor of Austria, and therefore leaned towards Russia, Bismarck thoroughly distrusted Russian policy as represented by Prince Gorchakov, and was far more inclined to consider Andrassy as a profitable German ally.

Now the British Government made a forward step. Lord Odo Russell was informed, but with particular instructions to keep the news secret, that Sir Henry Elliot had been directed to leave Constantinople if the armistice were refused by the Porte, but Bismarck, in seclusion though he might be, was being kept very well informed of what was happening in the other capitals of Europe. Hearing of this step, then, both from Rome and Constantinople, he asked Russell if he could confirm it, adding that it was a matter of great importance as he would wish to frame his policy accordingly. He could hardly believe that H.M.G. would contemplate such a serious step without informing the guaranteeing Powers with whom they were in concert. It was an awkward moment for the British Ambassador. He dealt with it by reminding Bülow that he had himself informed him a few days since that Sir Henry Elliot's instructions authorised him to use all possible means to induce the Porte to grant the armistice, and that he thought the British Ambassador in

Constantinople might have pointed out to the Turkish Government the many serious consequences obstinacy might involve.<sup>1</sup> But he immediately telegraphed to London for permission to acquaint the German Government officially with the facts.

The permission was given, and Bülow was gratified.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 11 October 1876.<sup>2</sup>—

“ . . . Prince Bismarck naïvely holds that after the repeated offers he had made since last January to support the policy of England in Turkey he has acquired the privilege of being kept informed of the measures H.M.G. wish him to support, and since he had found out from Constantinople and Rome, and, as I have since learned, from Livadia, the secret instructions sent to Sir Henry Elliot on 5 inst. I was glad Your Lordship enabled me by a prompt communication of the exact truth to remove any Germanic susceptibility or touchiness His Serene Highness may have given way to at the discovery. . . . ”

Lord Odo Russell could appreciate Bismarck's touchiness. With the Manteuffel mission still fresh in his mind, Bismarck might be forgiven if he read into these secret instructions a further proof of an Anglo-Russian rapprochement, and a fear that a conference would show that England and Russia were acting together at Constantinople. Until he returned to Berlin and could be interviewed, Lord Odo Russell could not say exactly what was in Bismarck's mind, and perhaps not even then, but so far as he could judge Bismarck supported the idea of an armistice, but shared with Count Andrassy the objection to a conference. While Russell was reminding Lord Derby that if Great Britain also supported Andrassy the combined pressure of England, Germany and Austria would be sufficient to check any ulterior designs Russia might have on Turkey, Austria herself seemed to be drifting into an internal conflict with Hungarian particularism and Russia and England appeared to be drawing closer together, so for the moment Bismarck could discern no clear path through the thicket, and he preferred to hold his hand in the hope that as the situation developed, it might also become

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 440. To Lord Derby. Secret. 10 October 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 441.

clearer. He had to reckon with the Emperor's preference for his nephew and was disappointed to find that public opinion, too, was far more Russian than Hungarian.<sup>1</sup>

This summary of Bismarck's attitude made no great impression on the Foreign Office. Lord Tenterden was quite unable to understand it, unless it meant that Russell was "really in the dark as to Prince Bismarck's intentions and policy." Lord Derby wished Lord Odo to be informed that Sir Henry's instructions were not communicated to any government except Germany, who could only have heard of it after it had been acted upon. He emphasized England's earnest desire to work with Germany, and thought she could do a great deal to help towards the preservation of peace if she could prevail upon Russia to accept the armistice. As Bismarck, however, appeared to be opposed to the idea of a conference, he would like to know "what other plan for procuring an agreement between the Powers he would consider favourably."<sup>2</sup> Despite these douches of cold water, Lord Odo Russell's eyes seem to have seen more accurately than Lord Tenterden's or Lord Derby's. Bismarck's dilemma was real, and moreover, the touchiness he felt against Great Britain, and his disappointment was destined to grow and bear bitter fruit when the time became ripe for Germany to develop a colonial policy which for the first time brought her interests into direct conflict with those of England.

On 12 October Turkey accepted the armistice, with the stipulation that it must last six months. The Powers immediately grouped themselves into opposite camps; Austria, Great Britain and France agreed with the Turkish stipulation, while Russia and Serbia declared themselves opposed to it on the ground that so long an armistice unduly favoured Turkey as Serbia could not afford to keep her army so long on a war footing.<sup>3</sup>

Bismarck was looking at the situation from his accustomed point of view. "... The more difficult the crisis, the more circumspectly must we, as I think, conduct ourselves and express in our diplomacy that our interests do not lie in this or that shaping of the relations of the Turkish Empire, but in the position

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* 441. To Lord Derby. Secret. 11 October 1876.

<sup>2</sup>Endorsement on previous despatch.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. II. p.64.

in which the Powers that are friendly to us are brought to us and to each other. . . . The question whether we are to be brought into permanent friction with England, even more with Austria and most of all with Russia over the Eastern tangle is infinitely more important for Germany's future than all the relations of Turkey to her subjects and to the European Powers."<sup>1</sup>

In his fixed determination to look at everything from such an angle, Bismarck's instructions tended to become ambiguous and misleading. The British Government, for example, after acting on Lord Odo's telegram that Bismarck had urged the acceptance of the armistice on Serbia, were bewildered and annoyed to find that it was followed by a letter which threw all into confusion. Bülow now said "the conditions of the armistice were not yet known, but there was reason to fear that the proposed period of its duration might be objected to at Vienna and in Russia. The German Government had no wish to raise difficulties and would therefore reserve their opinion until they had received more detailed reports from Constantinople and they were in possession of the views of the guaranteeing Powers."<sup>2</sup> Such a discrepancy demanded explanation, and Lord Odo Russell was asked if he could account for it. He replied that Bismarck himself had apparently no objection to offer to the prolongation of the armistice, but the difficulty was raised by the Emperor William, who saw the force of the Russian point of view and who would not go against his nephew. Delay was caused by the distance between Varzin, Berlin and Baden, and therefore contradictory statements had been made. The statement about Serbia's being urged to accept the armistice had been made to him by Bülow when they met on the train from Potsdam,<sup>3</sup> and he had telegraphed accordingly, but later in the day, when he called at the Foreign Office, although Bülow repeated the statement he had made earlier in the day, he now qualified it in the sense already known to the British Foreign Office. ". . . I did not understand this reservation to apply to the acceptance in principle of the armistice," concluded he, "but to the mode of meeting and dealing with the possible objections of other Powers—and I believe that the German Government would have continued to

<sup>1</sup>G.P. II. p.64.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 442. To Lord Derby. 13 October 1876.

<sup>3</sup>As Lord Odo telegraphed asking to have these words omitted, they are accordingly crossed out in the despatch.

urge its acceptance if the Emperor had not finally intimated at Baden through General von Schweinitz his wish not to adopt a course that would give pain to his nephew the Czar."<sup>1</sup> Since Bismarck had fallen in with this idea, he evidently thought that Russian interests were compatible with those of Germany for the time being, and this caused Disraeli no little apprehension. He now fully realized how imperative it was for Great Britain and Germany to co-operate, the Queen entirely agreeing,<sup>2</sup> and he hoped he saw signs that the decision in favour of Russia had not been in accordance with Bismarck's real wishes. He suggested to Lord Derby that the time had now come to negotiate a treaty on the basis of the *status quo* which would make Great Britain easy about Constantinople, "and relieve Bismarck of his real bugbear, the eventual alliance of England and France, and the loss of his two captured provinces." He realized the Emperor might make difficulties, but thought Bismarck might be able to manage him. But he gloomily added: "The real difficulty is to get hold of Bismarck. I counted on Odo Russell, but he might as well be at Bagdad. And Münster is not a genial nature to work on. He is suspicious and stupid. Still, I think the thing ought to be done and it would settle everything for our lives and immortalize yourself."<sup>3</sup> Such a bargain would have been a cynical one, but Lord Derby did not see himself "immortalized" in this way. He entirely disbelieved in the plan.<sup>4</sup> But in any case, unfortunately for the success of the scheme, the situation in Berlin was not at all as it appeared in the mirror of Disraeli's excited imagination. When Bismarck was approached through Bülow to suggest some alternative plan to a conference and was informed that England wished to co-operate with Germany to find a solution to the Eastern Question, he showed that he was far from being impressed with the trend of British policy, in which he could discern neither statesmanship in design nor vision in execution. He felt strongly enough about it to express his feelings in a stiffly worded minute,<sup>5</sup> and the substance of his observations was passed on to Russell by Bülow in a private conversation, who in his turn passed them on to London, to-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 465. To Lord Derby. 20 October 1876.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. pp.489-490.

<sup>3</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. p.81.

<sup>4</sup>Q.V. II. pp.490-491.

<sup>5</sup>G.P. II. pp.69-72.

gether with his own reflections on the situation. If Disraeli had been seriously contemplating a treaty with Germany that was to settle everything for his generation and immortalize the name of Lord Derby, this despatch must indeed have opened his eyes.

*To Lord Derby.* Most Confidential. 23 October 1876.<sup>1</sup>—

"... I was about to take my leave of Herr von Bülow when His Excellency said that Prince Bismarck had added some private and confidential remarks in his letter from Varzin which were interesting as showing his own private and personal way of viewing the present situation of affairs, but which were not intended for communication. Considering, however, the personal relations existing between the Prince and myself, he would confide them to me privately for my own personal information, and in so doing he reckoned on my discretion.

Prince Bismarck began by saying that he was the first to admit that every government and nation knew their own interests best, and that others had no right to interfere, but that he could not refrain from a slight feeling of disappointment and surprise at the policy pursued by H.M.G. He failed to understand what interest England had in risking a second time to dissolve the European Concert for the sake of the Turkish Empire which peace could not long keep together, and war must inevitably break up. For his part he loved peace better than the Turks. Believing England to be the Power most likely and best able to maintain peace in Europe, he had begged at the commencement of the crisis to be allowed to support her efforts to find a pacific solution of the Eastern problem. Events had not justified his hopes and expectations. He no longer felt confident that the policy substituted by H.M.G. for that proposed by Austria and Russia in May last would lead to the result desired and intended at the time.

When England rejected the plan of pacification accepted and agreed to by five of the guaranteeing Powers as not calculated to effect its object, the Powers had gladly and confidently followed her powerful lead, relying on her great influence to compel the Porte to accept her friendly advice, supported collectively by them. But when the Porte, whose game it is to sow discord among her protectors, rejected the English proposal, H.M.G. accepted without hesitation the Turkish counter-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 472.



proposition and recommended it to the Powers in preference to the plan they had been invited themselves to recommend to the Porte by England.

This he regretted because it rendered a third re-establishment of the European Concert even more difficult than before. Besides which, it tended still further to encourage the Turks to resist, and the Slav national party to increase their demands, while it gave time for dissensions between Austria and Russia, dangerous to the former and embarrassing to Germany, who looked upon the maintenance of the European Concert as the first condition of peace. He firmly believed that the Czar and his Chancellor would continue to do their utmost to avoid an aggressive policy, but they were no longer masters of the situation in Russia, and they could not return from Livadia to St. Petersburg without a moral guarantee that the demands of the Slav subjects of the Porte would be satisfied. If that could not be obtained they might be reluctantly compelled to appease the national outburst in Russia by occupying some portion of Turkish territory, but they would not do so, he felt sure, if it could possibly be avoided.

It might then become extremely difficult for Count Andrassy to resist the pressure of the Slav party in Austria who would equally clamour for a material guarantee, perhaps even the occupation of Bosnia. Public opinion in Germany would not object, because there was more sympathy for the claims of the Christians to a better government than for the continuance of Turkish rule, and the partiality of England for the Turks was not understood or shared in Germany.

H.M.G. seemed to think that the rejection of the Turkish counter-proposition for a six months' armistice might lead to war. He did not see it, but if he should be mistaken it would be the interest of Germany to remain neutral and to seek to localize the war in concert with the Powers not concerned in the conflict. He was the first to acknowledge the vital interests of England in Egypt, Asia and India, he could appreciate the wish of England to prolong the Sultan's rule on the Bosphorus, but he failed to see what interest England had to defend north of the Balkans that could be dearer to her than peace. It was his most earnest wish to join hands with England for the maintenance of peace, but public opinion in Germany would not support a war policy for the Sublime Porte who was no longer able to supply the just demands of her Christian subjects for a civilized administration in accordance with modern requirements.

Notwithstanding, however, past and present appearances and

the many elements of discord still to be overcome and the many claims on Turkey a conference would call forth, he believed in peace, and he felt convinced that England would in the end be foremost in contributing to its maintenance in concert with Germany.

The impression left on my mind by Herr von Bülow's confidential communication is that Prince Bismarck wishes for a more lasting settlement of the Turkish question than he suspects H.M.G. are prepared to sanction. He thought that a mere 'replastering' of the edifice as originally proposed by Prince Gorchakov would not last many months, and when he offered his support and co-operation to England, he fancied that the purchase of the Suez Canal shares indicated a tendency to secure the road to India, and arrest the progress of Russia in the East. He then hoped to realize, with the consent of England, his favourite scheme of inducing Austria gradually to extend her dominion over European Turkey and of keeping Russia in check with the help of England and Austria combined.

Events have not taken the course he expected, England has not annexed Egypt and has not opposed the progress of Russia—so he turns to the rising sun in the East and hopes to get through Russia what he had hoped to obtain through England i.e., a more thorough and lasting settlement of the ever-recurring Turkish question, and the extension of Austrian rule in Eastern Europe.

Prince Bismarck has probably also been influenced by the strong Russian sympathies of the Emperor, the court and his generals—and by the anti-Turkish feeling which manifests itself in Germany, so that he may think it will be easier for him to go with the stream than to oppose it.

My Austrian colleague, who shares this impression, tells me that the German Ambassador, General von Schweinitz will be instructed to follow Lord Augustus Loftus to Livadia."

After this, it is not surprising that the Queen found Germany "unmanageable," nor that she should say, "Lord Odo Russell shows but too clearly *how* impossible it is to come to any agreement with Prince Bismarck. The Queen must own, she thinks worse of him than of Gorchakov . . ."<sup>1</sup> but in the light of all this the statement that, "here we have the germ of the policy which was brought into actual working by Beaconsfield at the Congress

<sup>1</sup>Q.V. II. 494-6.

of Berlin. . . ." makes strange reading.<sup>1</sup> The Queen had the additional mortification of reading a similar complaint about British policy from her daughter at the same time. Lord Odo Russell was not alone in his misgivings.

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 81-2.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONFERENCE

[1876]

*A firman is not worth the pod of a bean.*

—HERZEGOVINIAN PROVERB.

*Prelude to the Conference.*—Russian ultimatum to Turkey—Turkey's submission—conference proposed—Germany's attitude—the idea accepted—Lord Salisbury's journey to Constantinople—return of Bismarck from Varzin—exchange of views with Lord Odo Russell—extreme tension in Europe.

*The Conference.*—The Conference viewed from Berlin—unexpected developments—obscurity of the situation at the beginning of 1877—apparent change in Bismarck's policy—Russell's report—British feeling that Berlin was centre of intrigue—Bismarck's dread—failure of Conference—Lord Odo Russell and Bismarck on its results—Lord Odo Russell's warning of the understanding between the three Emperors.

*After the Conference.*—Bismarck's attempt to form an Anglo-German convention—consequent increase of British suspicion—internal complications in Germany owing to growth of Social Democracy—British overtures to Russia in the interests of peace—Franco-German tension—the Ignatyev mission—Bismarck's explanation of German policy—the protocol proposed by Russia for presentation to Turkey accepted by the Powers—crisis in Berlin—resignation of Bismarck—Lord Odo Russell on the situation—the resignation withdrawn.

#### I

“Germany is on friendly terms with all the Powers and the Emperor's efforts will always tend to further the maintenance of friendly relations with all, and more especially with those whose position and history are nearer to her. As to the future, Germany may rest assured that the blood of her sons shall be shed in defence of her own honour and interests only.”

WITH these words the Emperor opened the Reichstag on the very same day that Russia presented a final ultimatum to the Porte, demanding an armistice of one month or six weeks.

The Porte submitted, and the consequent outburst of British indignation found no counterpart in Berlin, where German policy, as veiled behind the Emperor's cryptic utterances, remained a mystery which Lord Odo Russell was doing his best to unravel. He saw ever more reason to believe that Bismarck had been profoundly influenced by Manteuffel's report that Russia and England were growing too intimate, and by the sending of Lord Augustus Loftus to Livadia. This would account for the mission of Schweinitz to the Crimea, for having been deceived in the belief that England and Austria must act together in the East, and fearing instead that Britain and Russia were concerting together, Bismarck thought it prudent to drop Austria and turn to Russia so as to be on the winning side.<sup>1</sup> But the ultimatum threw another pattern on the kaleidoscope, for the armistice by itself decided nothing, and another step had to be taken immediately—by someone. It was taken by Great Britain, when a Cabinet Council on 4 November resolved that a conference must be held forthwith, whether Bismarck approved or not, and on the 6th Lord Odo Russell officially communicated this proposal to Bülow. Four days later he was in a position to report that the German Government, having accepted the conference proposal in principle, were only waiting for the adherence of the other Powers before giving their official consent. The Emperor did not seem disposed to appoint a second plenipotentiary with ambassadorial rank, but desired that Baron Werther should act as Germany's sole representative, both at the preliminary discussions and at the conference.<sup>2</sup> All the Powers being at length agreed, preparations went forward for the conference to meet in Constantinople in December.

General von Werder, now returned from a mission to Russia, had brought back a letter which evidently afforded his master great satisfaction. Lord Odo Russell learned that the Tsar remained pacifically inclined, despite recent events, but was determined to secure adequate reforms for the Christians by diplomatic representation. It was essential, considering the state of feeling in Russia that these be secured, even at the cost of occupying Turkish territory. This would involve an Austrian

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 855. No. 485. To Lord Derby. 3 November 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 856. No. 495. To Lord Derby. 10 November 1876.

occupation, and Russell again reminded Lord Derby that Germany would not object to this.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Odo Russell was now expecting a welcome visitor. Lord Salisbury, the second plenipotentiary of Great Britain at the conference, had decided to visit the principal capitals on his outward journey. The Emperor intimated that the visit would be most agreeable to him, and Bismarck wrote that he would make special arrangements to come to Berlin to see him. Russell warned his visitor that though he would find Bismarck anxious to act with Great Britain for the maintenance of peace, yet at the moment he placed more faith on the Russian efforts to impose peace on Turkey than on those of the British.<sup>2</sup> The Emperor intimated his own point of view to Lord Odo Russell at a dinner given in the palace on the occasion of the birthday of the Crown Princess. He was delighted at the prospect of meeting with Lord Salisbury, and emphasized that peace or war depended on Great Britain, "that is, on the amount of encouragement and support England gave Turkey to resist the just and humane attempts of Russia, which had all his sympathies, to improve the condition of the Christian subjects of the Sultan." Russell, on the contrary, maintained that "peace depended on Russia being content to accept the guarantees Turkey would be called upon to give by the Conference without persisting further in her threatened wish to violate the solemn engagements of the guaranteeing Powers by an occupation of Turkish territory." There seemed little common ground between these two points of view, and the Emperor could only remark that "he could not place the interests of the Porte above those of Christianity and of Europe in general, but that he felt sure that H.M. Government desired peace as much as he did. He therefore attached great value to Lord Salisbury's mission and hoped His Lordship's conversation with Prince Bismarck would promote peace and tighten the bonds that united England and Germany."<sup>3</sup>

Bismarck, according to his promise, returned to Berlin and showed a certain readiness to discuss the Eastern Question, referring to it quite spontaneously at a dinner, assuring Lord

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 494. To Lord Derby. Secret. 9 November 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 856. No. 510. To Lord Derby. Private. 17 November 1876.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 856. No. 522. To Lord Derby. Secret. 25 November 1876. A month later Disraeli called Russell a "Russian courtier," an accusation that fits in badly with this despatch. See Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 112.

Odo Russell that Germany's policy would be one of absolute neutrality in the event of war, and stressing the importance he placed on Austrian relations. Then came a curious assertion. He said that when the Emperor had used the words "historical friendship" in his speech at the opening of the Reichstag, "a distant allusion to England had been meant," and he had been astonished to find that this allusion had been "completely overlooked and misunderstood."<sup>1</sup>

The British Ambassador was not inclined to take this remark too seriously. For one thing, he noticed that after dinner talk was liable to different interpretations so far as Bismarck was concerned, and for another, Bismarck's official policy, as expounded in the Reichstag a few days later was that "he must reserve his opinion for the present as to a future settlement of the Eastern Question if the Powers should fail to localize the war between Turkey and Russia." Russell's private opinion was that Bismarck, very sceptical as to a peaceful or lasting settlement of the Eastern Question if the Porte were the sole guarantee, had come to see that "the crumbling edifice" would have to be bolstered up by some scheme of territorial occupation by the Powers. The form of occupation that would please him best would be an Austrian protectorate down the Danube, and embracing the Slav population of East Europe, and a British protectorate over Egypt and Syria. Then they could look with tranquil eyes on Russian expansion round the Black Sea. These protectorates once established, a joint occupation of the Dardanelles might guarantee the peaceful existence of the Turkish Empire for many years, just as previously the temporal power of the Popes had been maintained in Rome. This general solution "modified according to the requirements of the situation," was the one that he believed commended itself to Bismarck.<sup>2</sup>

## II

The meeting of the Conference synchronized with an extreme state of tension, both in London and Berlin. While the British

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 536. To Lord Derby. 3 December 1876.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 856. No. 537. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 6 December 1876.

Government were commandeering guns in process of manufacture for a foreign Power,<sup>1</sup> Lord Odo Russell was communicating the news that he had heard rumours that Russia had ordered so many blankets from Germany that wool advanced in price by 16 per cent.;<sup>2</sup> and the German authorities were still pursuing a policy of such military secrecy that Russell doubted if any good purpose would be served by appointing a military attaché to take the place of Major General Walker, now about to resign. He felt so strongly about it that he even suggested the advisability of some kind of reprisal, but the Foreign Office failed to see that this would serve any good purpose, as "the German Attaché could get information from a colleague."<sup>3</sup>

In such an atmosphere of mutual fear and suspicion, the chances of success in Constantinople were not worth counting on, and while the Conference was pursuing its futile course various forces were at work in Berlin. In spite of his Russian sympathies, the Emperor was very anxious about the state of Europe, and could not altogether follow Russia's actions. He feared that war must soon ensue, and having reason to believe that her army was not so well prepared as was generally believed, he had small reason to hope that she would meet with uninterrupted success,<sup>4</sup> and his gloom was not dispelled by Münster's report that "England could not exercise any special pressure on the Porte to compel the acceptance of the proposals of the Conference."<sup>5</sup> In his anxiety he commanded Bismarck to ask Lord Odo Russell to represent to his Government that unless England acted with the other five Powers, the Porte, thus encouraged to resist, would find herself at war with Russia. Bismarck, delivering the message without comment, contented himself with observing that he felt sure H.M. Government would do all they could in the interests of peace at the Conference. Lord Derby, suspecting that Bismarck and the Emperor were trying "to get H.M.G. to compromise themselves by assenting beforehand to Russia using force, or taking responsibility for war," instructed Russell to say that Münster seemed to have misunderstood the attitude of Great Britain. "While England

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 102.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 856 encl. to No. 541. Walker's Despatch. 9 December 1876.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* 556. To Lord Derby. Secret. 22 December 1876.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* Encl. to No. 562. Walker's Despatch. 22 December 1876.

<sup>5</sup>G.P. II. p.120.



would not use coercion to extort consent, she would not hold out to the Porte any hope of assistance or protection in the event of war on her refusal to entertain proposals.”<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck discussed the situation with Lord Odo Russell. Proposals were being made at Constantinople which he could not support; he failed, for example, to understand the suggestion to use Belgian gendarmerie—it would only make the Porte more obstinate in refusing the whole scheme of reform—nor would he consent to the withdrawal of the embassies. Russia, ready to fight, would naturally withdraw, but Germany was not about to begin hostilities, and German subjects and interests required protection, therefore the ambassador would only be withdrawn on leave.

“What would Great Britain do?” he asked.

In the absence of definite instructions Lord Odo could only reply that he assumed a *chargé d'affaires* would be left in charge in the event of the ambassador's withdrawal. But these points were only details—the real situation Russell had to deal with was Bismarck's regret that he had not been able to interest Lord Salisbury in Austria, and that he was paying more attention to General Ignatyev than to Count Zichy. Austria had to counter this by struggling for equally good relations with Russia, who in her turn, would become dictatorial and exploit the situation to her own advantage. He rejoiced at the good relations between Russia and England, but he did not wish to see Austria left out in the cold. If a quarrel took place between Austria and Russia and Andrassy resigned, an Austrian alliance with Turkey to make war on Russia was possible, and the influence of England exerted to secure friendly relations between Austria and Russia could do much to avoid this calamity. Count Andrassy's policy deserved the heartiest support. Lord Odo was moved to inquire what chance Russia would have against the combined forces of Austria and Turkey. “None whatever!” replied Bismarck, and he added that the Emperor and the army wished for peace. The women and priests led by the Empress and encouraged by Gorchakov, wanted war, and a war-like demonstration could hardly be avoided if the Conference failed. He again earnestly requested that England should extend the same cordiality towards Austria

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 856. No number. Telegram to O.R. 28 December 1876.

that now happily existed between England, Russia and Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Events were evidently not shaping themselves at Constantinople as Bismarck desired, and there were signs of secret activity between the courts of Germany and Austria. The Austrian Ambassador suddenly left for Vienna, and though nothing certain was known, it was rumoured that Count Andrassy wanted to know if Austria could count on German support if she quarrelled with Russia about Turkey.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the situation more pleasing to Disraeli. Salisbury's telegram that Turkey would not yield and that war must be expected,<sup>3</sup> led him to exclaim that he was "much duped by Ignatyev," and that he had "unnecessarily bullied the Turks." He demanded that the thing must stop. "Lyons could have done it," he said, "Odo Russell ought to do it in Berlin. . . ."<sup>4</sup>

But the thing did not stop. Salisbury continued to fear war. "Is he informed of the reports of Loftus, of Lyons, of all, even the Russian courtier Odo, showing the necessity and wish for peace?"<sup>5</sup> Lord Odo Russell's own despatches are the best comment on Beaconsfield's frame of mind.

1877 opened like a misty morning in a strange country—nothing could be clearly seen and the landscape presented unfamiliar features, and especially was this so in Berlin. In Constantinople Lord Salisbury and Count Chaudordy were establishing entirely unexpectedly good relations with Ignatyev, and Turkey was developing powers of resistance even beyond those which Europe had learned by experience to anticipate. A third unexpected complication was the unreadiness of Russia for war as demonstrated by the disappointing result of her secret mobilization, and her consequent conciliatory attitude.<sup>6</sup> Bismarck had to explore the situation anew in the light of these unwelcome facts. He had so often maintained that his interest in the Eastern Question was limited to its effects on the international relations between the Great Powers, that the policy he now began to develop had all the appearance of a cynical intrigue,

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 856. No. 569. To Lord Derby. Secret. 27 December 1876.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 570. Secret. 29 December 1876.

<sup>3</sup>Cecil: *Salisbury* II. 117.

<sup>4</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 111.

<sup>5</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 112.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 64. 876. Walker's Despatch. 2 January 1877.

though it may equally well have been actuated by the single aim that inspired his work from beginning to end. Before the Conference began Lord Salisbury had felt instinctively in Berlin that the coming struggle with France occupied all his thoughts, and when he had emphasized his lack of interest in Eastern affairs, he did so with the mental reservation that his academic attitude would only last as long as France did not fish in troubled waters. He looked through Constantinople to see the Vosges.

Lord Odo Russell was fully aware that secret activities were taking place behind the scenes between Germany and Austria. He thought at first it was a case of Andrassy trying to draw Bismarck. The prospect of an Anglo-Russian agreement at Constantinople, and the consequent possibility of a localized war between Russia and Turkey might leave the Tsar master of the situation, but her unreadiness for war showed she was not at the moment strong enough to fight more than one Power. Here was Andrassy's opportunity. Given the neutrality of Germany he was in a position "to break up Turkey and paralyse Russia for years to come," and it was to secure this neutrality that the Austrian Ambassador had been making his mysterious journeys to and fro, but Bismarck, thought Lord Odo Russell, was cautious and recommended "a strict adherence to the maintenance of peace as well as of the Northern alliance as the safest policy for Austria."<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, what was to be the result of the Conference? If Lord Beaconsfield was confident of its success nobody else was, and the German Government were not disposed to support any suggestion for continuing it in some other city, nor would they authorize the German Ambassador to sign the protocol proposed by General Ignatyev without a full knowledge of the wording of the document.<sup>2</sup> At the same time the Ambassador began to hold such decisive language that Germany assumed the rôle of a difficult principal rather than that of a disinterested spectator. Lord Salisbury, amazed at this change of front, telegraphed direct to Berlin, without informing London, asking Lord Odo Russell confidentially if he could tell him anything about the different policy implied in the energetic language of Count Hatzfeldt, and his instructions to withhold any consent to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 4. To Lord Derby. 1 January 1877.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 6. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 5 January 1877.

"demands less stringent than those addressed to Turkey in the first instance."<sup>1</sup> He replied by telegram, both to Constantinople and London that no change of policy was implied, Bismarck merely wished to be made acquainted with any measures before giving his consent.

The Foreign Office was taken by surprise at Russell's communication. "Do not understand what your telegram of to-day refers to," wired back Lord Derby, "it would be better for you not to telegraph direct to Lord Salisbury. Any telegram from you received here can be repeated to him."<sup>2</sup>

Despite his reassuring statement to Lord Odo Russell, Bismarck's anxiety was growing. He instructed Count Münster to inform Lord Derby that he had received no details of the proposed concessions from Count Hatzfeldt, but that he had the impression that some kind of binding protocol was suggested. This Lord Derby denied—the proposals were merely put forward as a basis for further discussion.<sup>3</sup> While these somewhat futile conversations were proceeding in London, Lord Odo Russell in Berlin was occupied in trying to fathom the apparent change of policy which Bismarck denied. From reliable sources he heard that it was due to the Emperor's fear that the Conference would change the policy of the Great Powers if no limit were put to the spirit of concession which, as far as he could see, only encouraged the Porte to resist,<sup>4</sup> but Lord Beaconsfield preferred to believe that Bismarck was determined either to push Russia into war, or else to humiliate Gorchakov, a view held with conviction that almost amounted to fury by the Queen.<sup>5</sup> Shuvalov found Bismarck's policy difficult to follow and asked Gorchakov whether the much-vaunted entente between the three Emperors could effectively preserve peace when it could not even be mentioned in England.

"Who," he asked bitterly, "are they whose instructions are the most limited, who have taken every question *ad referendum* while others accepted them, who have created difficulties at the eleventh hour, it is not Italy nor France, nor even England? It is sad, but it must be said . . ." and now, to crown all,

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 17. Secret. 8 January 1877.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 874. No. 13. To Lord Odo Russell. 9 January 1877.

<sup>3</sup>No. 22. 10 January 1877.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 21. To Lord Derby. 12 January 1877.

<sup>5</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 113. Q.V. II. 516.

Andrassy, through Sir Andrew Buchanan, was denying that any agreement existed.<sup>1</sup> This was a new complication, and in his anger Shuvalov decided to cut the Gordian Knot, by acquainting Lord Derby with the fact that an intimate understanding existed between the three Northern courts. Although Lord Derby might have been prepared for this news by Lord Odo Russell's despatches, he was nevertheless mystified, for he had just been informed that Andrassy was "privately propping up the Turks," and was boasting of the fact. In his perplexity he consulted the British Ambassador in Berlin, who replied immediately. Promptness was one of Lord Odo Russell's most praiseworthy qualities, and he had made several interesting discoveries since his last summary of Austrian policy.

*To Lord Derby.* Most Confidential. 11 January 1877.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Count Shuvalov is perfectly right and even though Count Andrassy occasionally boasts of 'privately propping up the Turks,' his policy has after all been all along in the interest of Russia and not in that of Turkey.

Russia and Germany are natural allies, and Count Andrassy's tenure of office depends on their good-will and support, as does indeed, the very existence of the Austrian Empire.

The rejection of the Berlin Memorandum showed the Northern Powers the necessity of consulting and of soliciting the support of H.M.G. before settling the Turkish question among themselves.

The understanding between them became in consequence more intimate for the purpose of obtaining if possible by joint action the co-operation of England in addition to that of France and Italy they had already secured, because they apprehended that the isolation of England might encourage the tendency of the Porte to resistance or inaction and hasten on the events in the East, the Berlin Memorandum was intended to postpone, and thereby necessitated on their part a more energetic action in Turkey, which they were unwilling to adopt without the support of H.M.G. The three Powers then agreed to subordinate the policy laid down in the Berlin Memorandum and their minor differences of opinion in regard to details and the *modus operandi* to the initiative of England, and to encourage, promote and follow the lead of England as long as possible.

<sup>1</sup>Russian Documents printed in *Slavonic Review* V. No. 166.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 23.

If that should ever fail them the three Powers have come to an intimate understanding among each other to coerce Turkey by military occupations which would be carried out by Austria and Russia and supported by Germany.

The Northern Powers have also agreed that it would be conducive to their own future advantage if England could be gradually induced to transfer her interests and the weight of her influence from European Turkey to Egypt and Syria."

Here was material to give Derby furiously to think, for whatever the explanation, these were anxious days, when nobody could fathom the motive of German policy in Constantinople, and when Lord Salisbury could only compare the German Ambassador's refusal to allow any abatement of concessions to "playing the part of Sir Lucius O'Trigger."<sup>1</sup> In London, it disgusted Shuvalov, infuriated the Queen, convinced Disraeli that if Bismarck did not intend war, he at least wanted to humiliate Gorchakov and had even induced Lord Derby to ask Russell what he made of it. But Bismarck, who was causing all this perturbation, had his own troubles as well. In the German elections which took place at this juncture, he saw to his horror socialist members returned for Berlin and simultaneously alarming rumours of Franco-German tension were abroad.<sup>2</sup> With all this on his mind, he thought it well to see Lord Odo Russell and offer him an official denial that German policy was changed, and to issue a similar denial in the *Reichsanzeiger*.<sup>3</sup>

Having officially denied a change of policy, and recognizing the failure of the Conference Bismarck had another conversation with Lord Odo Russell in order to find out from him the next step H.M.G. proposed to take, and also to express his own views.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 16 January 1877.<sup>4</sup>—

"... H.H. said that the conference was drawing to a close, and that he would be glad to know what H.M.G. intended to do about it.

I said I did not know, but judging from the present situation I imagined that H.M.G. would do nothing.

Prince Bismarck said that if he were consulted his advice would certainly be to do nothing—because there was nothing to

<sup>1</sup>Cecil: *Lord Salisbury* II. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 187.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 34. To Lord Derby. 16 January 1877.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 36.

be done. He never liked conferences, he never expected any useful result from them and as far as he was concerned he would never go into conference again.

I said I could not agree with him. The conference was a necessary experiment and it had produced useful though unexpected results. It had shown the strength of Turkey and the weakness of Russia and had confirmed the European Concert—so that we were better informed and better able to deal with the question now than before the conference and if war ensued between Turkey and Russia it could be localized, which would be an advantage to the rest of Europe.

Prince Bismarck said he did not require a conference to tell him all that and he feared the future consequences of the Conference more than he regretted its present failure. Turkey had displayed the spirit of two centuries ago—but had happily refrained from sending the ambassadors to the Seven Towers, whilst the collapse of Russia would leave a sense of humiliation and bitterness among her populations that would drive them into future efforts to retrieve their military honour—when it might be difficult to localize a war into which Russia would seek to drag other nations.

I said that was a remote contingency—did he think Russia equal to a conflict with Turkey at present?

He replied that judging from the anxiety displayed at St. Petersburg to avoid war he must conclude that Prince Gorchakov either felt unprepared or was reluctant to transfer the power at present in his own hands to those of the War Office of a commander-in-chief.

I said that the intimate relations existing between Russia and Germany must enable him to ascertain what was really intended.

Prince Bismarck said that since the commencement of the Conference he had not been consulted or informed by any Power except Austria. The conferences had been managed by the Marquis of Salisbury, General Ignatyev and Count Chaudordy. He did not complain of neglect since he had no interest in the matter, but he regretted to detect a tendency on the part of the French Government to set Russia against Germany with what object he did not well know—but he hoped it was only to produce sufficient alarm on 'change' to facilitate the Duc Decazes' favourite pastime.

Now it was easy enough to establish a raw between Russians and Germans because individually there was no love lost between them.

He well knew that he was as much hated in Russia as Prince Gorchakov was laughed at in Germany. On the other hand the two governments had been friends for more than a century which proves that there must be real material advantages in an alliance that was certainly not based on either international love or respect.

It was the duty of a German Minister to prolong an understanding which secured the frontier of Germany against invasion from Memel to Ratisbon.

Russia had rendered Germany services which he could not forget and Russia should not be misled by France into thinking she could not rely on Germany any more. He therefore wished to give Russia what moral support he could in her present humiliation, and the more so to disprove the calumnies of a hostile press that accused him of wanting to weaken Russia still more by urging her on to war.

He had already rendered her a signal service by persuading Austria to desist from interference between Russia and Turkey and he was glad to think that he had re-established a complete understanding between Austria and Russia for the present. But whether that understanding would be a lasting one or not he could not say because a change of ministry in Austria might undo all his work.

I asked what Austria had proposed to do?

He replied that Austria objected to a Russian occupation of Servia as well as to a 'localized war' between Russia and Turkey—but that he had proved to Count Karolyi that interference was more dangerous than strict neutrality in the present case. On the other hand he had persuaded Russia to give up the idea of the occupation of Servia in deference to the objections of Austria.

As matters now stood he believed Russia wished earnestly for peace, and would not attack Turkey—but if Turkey declared war, he thought Russia would be satisfied with one victory and pay for it by relinquishing all idea of conquest. That would be his advice to Russia if consulted.

I said I thought he believed Russia to be unequal to a conflict with Turkey.

He replied that was his impression for the present, but that Russia some months hence might be better prepared to resist an attack on the part of Turkey than now. He hoped that Turkey left to herself would think better of it, and would not attack Russia and *that* was the reason for which he held that the less done by the Powers after the Conference the better, so as to let Turkey reflect on her isolation.



I said it appeared to me that the understanding between Germany and Austria and Russia was precarious to say the least of it.

Prince Bismarck replied that it might appear so while they discussed their respective interests and differed on certain points, but that their earnest desire to maintain the peace of Europe would always unite them to avert war.

I asked whether he had ever heard it reported that Count Andrassy sometimes boasted to his friends of 'privately propping up the Turks?'

B. did not believe Count Andrassy had ever said so, and if he had, his object must have been to throw sand in someone's eyes. Count Andrassy well knew that a change of ministry in Austria would not be favourable to Hungary. He was a prudent statesman and also knew the value of an intimate understanding with Russia as well as he (Prince Bismarck) did himself.

... The upshot of his remarks I take to be that he is afraid of a Franco-Russian alliance and means to prevent it by supporting Russia in the coming crisis by a somewhat more than benevolent neutrality."

This was a long conversation and Bismarck after all, had committed himself to very little, but as the week wore on there were only too many signs in Berlin that something was in the air. Frequent interviews were taking place between Bismarck and Oubril, and while the Grand-duke Vladimir was in Berlin the German Ambassador in Vienna unexpectedly turned up as well, while the Austrian Ambassador was absent on a visit to Vienna and Pesth. The obvious explanation was that Russia was taking counsel about the circular it was known she was about to issue. Lord Odo Russell thought Bismarck's advice would be in favour of a further prosecution of Russian Christian and pro-Slav policy in Turkey. The Emperor William would support his nephew and never let him suffer humiliation as long as he lived. "Austria is kept informed of all that passes," he concluded, "but the more immediate object of the German Ambassador's journey from Vienna to Berlin is to communicate secretly to the German Government the fact that the Duc Decazes has taken confidential steps to sound Austria as to her attitude if Germany should attack France—a disclosure which has again incensed Prince Bismarck against France and rendered an understanding with Count Andrassy more intimate than ever, since it was

accompanied by the renewed assurance that Austria would never separate from her alliance with Germany and Russia."<sup>1</sup> But Lord Odo Russell knew nothing of the secret treaty which had just been signed in Vienna, he could only warn his Government in general terms that the three Northern Powers were preparing to deal with the situation created by the failure of the conference by action among themselves. Similar warnings, too, came from the Crown Prince, who wrote to tell the Queen what was happening at Berlin. He warned the Queen, as Russell had done, that "*Here it has been resolved to side under all circumstances with Russia.*"<sup>2</sup>

## III

Bismarck's next move was to toy with the idea of an Anglo-German convention. The whole incident is very obscure, but the scanty evidence seems to indicate that he was so alarmed at the threatening mobilization of French troops on her Eastern frontier, and at the possibilities opened up by the position she had manœuvred to obtain at Constantinople, which might even mean a regrouping of the Powers,<sup>3</sup> that he decided to make overtures to Great Britain as a counterpoise to the Austro-Russian agreement just concluded.<sup>4</sup> Although the official despatches contain no hint of such a scheme, Count Shuvalov certainly saw a letter from Lord Odo Russell proposing an alliance. The letter was sent by special carrier. It related that Bismarck, having asked Lord Odo to call and see him, greeted him in a state of great excitement, saying that the Russian circular went to prove that Europe was insulted by the failure of the Conference and that Gorchakov would therefore propose a collective coercion of the Porte. Not being immediately interested, Bismarck's only object was the maintenance of peace, and he wanted to know the

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 43. To Lord Derby. Secret. 28 January 1877.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. p.520.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. I. p.312.

<sup>4</sup>Dr. Japikse's conclusion that Eckardstein and Gorianov were mistaken in thinking that Bismarck proposed an anti-French alliance in February 1877 must be revised in the light of this evidence. Japikse: *Europa u. Bismarck's Friedenspolitik*, p.67. Shuvalov's despatch is corroborated from English sources.

British point of view, so that he could act in concert with her. Owing to the rapprochement with Russia, France could invade Alsace-Lorraine with an army of 500,000 men and would only require five days for mobilization. The German army was not so favourably situated, and would require ten days. These circumstances forced the Chancellor to recommend immediate military precautions to the Emperor. At the moment they were confined to concentrating garrisons and munitions at Metz and Strassburg and such measures would doubtless be regarded in France as a provocation. If war followed he wished to know what attitude Britain would take, and if she would offer mediation for the maintenance of peace. The idea seemed to be that in return for German support in the East, Bismarck should be able to rely on Britain in the West.<sup>1</sup> This must have been the letter which was read to an unresponsive cabinet on 10 February.<sup>2</sup> But in reaching out a hand towards England at this particular moment, and in such a way, Bismarck was grasping a nettle. Neither Disraeli nor Derby had any belief in the reality of a French attack on Germany, and they had already heard from Lord Lyons that the French believed Bismarck was working up a scare similar to that of 1875, and were not willing to put up with so much as they had then.<sup>3</sup> They were still mystified at Bismarck's change of policy at Constantinople, which only seemed explicable on the assumption that he wished the conference to be an apple of discord, and they knew from Russell and the Crown Prince that Germany was in close association with the Northern Powers. On Disraeli, particularly, the impression made by Bismarck's action was utterly unfavourable, it made him for the moment even more suspicious of Bismarck than of Gorchakov, and it may have been the deciding factor in his sudden enthusiasm for a "golden bridge" for Russia. "I believe that at no time was Russia more anxious for peace than at present. She is perfectly conscious of the intrigues of Bismarck to involve her in a struggle, which, whatever the ultimate result, must be materially disastrous to her, but she must have a golden bridge. The Moscow speech and the host on the Pruth render this necessary

<sup>1</sup>*Slavonic Review*, V. p.168.

<sup>2</sup>*Gathorne Hardy*: II. p.15; Cecil: *Salisbury* II. p.127. See also Buckle: *Disraeli*, VI. p.141. "... I often ask myself, if you had resolved to do nothing, why not have accepted Bismarck's offer. . . ?"

<sup>3</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 107.

... he who gains time, gains everything. By that period (eighteen months) France will be armed."<sup>1</sup> Disraeli feared that Bismarck, having pushed Russia into war, and neutralized England, would attack France, and if he could have seen the correspondence that now passed between Bismarck and Shuvalov, he would have been more suspicious than ever.<sup>2</sup> The opposition also were very apprehensive that a general war was imminent,<sup>3</sup> and Lady Derby was convinced that Franco-German tension accounted for Lord Beaconsfield's change of front.<sup>4</sup> The Queen was very much alarmed. "... Bismarck is making much mischief. We may be driven to draw closer to France,"<sup>5</sup> and Lord Salisbury warned Lord Lytton that Germany was a greater menace to England than Russia.<sup>6</sup> It was in the midst of this excited and suspicious world that the Russian circular descended. In view of all the changed and changing circumstances, and of the fact that a new government was functioning in Turkey, H.M.G. informed Bülow through Lord Odo Russell that they had decided to wait and see what effect this change of government might have. Bülow replied that that would also be the policy of the German Government.<sup>7</sup>

One factor in the German situation was far clearer to Lord Odo Russell in Berlin than it was to those in London, of whatever party—and that was the increasing difficulty of the internal position. Although the Government could still command a majority in the new Parliament, the opposition of the Social Democrats, augmented by many new members, was likely to make Bismarck's policy ever more difficult to carry out. The budget showed a deficit, and the growing expenditure on the army would have to be met by additional taxation. This had not been anticipated by the country at large, but would be accepted as necessary in the circumstances, especially as an uneasy feeling pervaded many circles that some kind of foreign coalition to disrupt the empire was to be feared. The Emperor's speech reviewing the situation was well received; it emphasized

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 126.

<sup>2</sup>*Gedanken u. Erinnerungen* II. 249.

<sup>3</sup>Gardiner: *Harcourt* I. 316.

<sup>4</sup>Hardinge: *Carnarvon* II. 351.

<sup>5</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 123.

<sup>6</sup>Cecil: *Lord Salisbury* II. 129.

<sup>7</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 66. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 16 February 1877.

the fact that Germany's policy would be directed towards the maintenance of peace.<sup>1</sup>

War for a definite object is one thing—war that may merely raise problems that human foresight cannot anticipate is the supreme dread of responsible statesmanship, and this was the brand of war that seemed staring Europe in the face in February 1877, and all men's minds were set on finding a "golden bridge." Disraeli, Lady Derby and Shuvalov are all using the same phrase in correspondence, for it so exactly expressed their thoughts that they repeated it one after the other, and even Lord Odo Russell wrote from Berlin, using the same happy expression and outlining the form such a bridge might take.

*To Lord Derby. Secret. 24 February 1877.*<sup>2</sup>—

"... The friends of peace believe that the coming Turco-Russian war might be averted if the Powers built Russia a golden bridge to help her out of her present dilemma—that the Powers are waiting to follow the lead of England in answering the Russian circular, and that England is waiting to see what Turkey will do before answering it. Russia, unanswered and isolated and therefore unable to demobilize without the semblance of a national satisfaction to uphold her honour, will be compelled to go to war, however much she would prefer peace. . . ."

He proceeded to outline its foundations, which he had been assured on unimpeachable authority would be acceptable both to the Tsar and Gorchakov. The important thing was to prevent isolated action by Russia, and this might be secured if the European accord were maintained and used to enforce sanctions against the Porte if within a certain agreed time the lot of the Christians were ameliorated.

Encouraged by Europe's more favourable attitude, Gorchakov now despatched Ignatyev on a mission throughout the capitals as the bearer of a protocol which it was hoped the other Powers would sign. A less welcome messenger could hardly have been chosen. Shuvalov hastily informed Gorchakov that there was absolutely no desire to see him in London, and Salisbury suggested hopefully that he had better postpone his visit until after

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 876. Nos. 72 and 74. To Lord Derby. 22 and 24 February 1877.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 75.

the crisis, for when the visit itself was announced its object was kept dark. Even to his own Ambassador Gorchakov at first pretended that the mission was unofficial, but sent him a despatch later by the hand of Ignatyev himself to say that his real motive was to throw light on Russia's intimate thoughts and thus prepare a practical reply favourable to the circular which would pave the way for a peaceful solution.<sup>1</sup> But in London nobody understood what good purpose the mission could possibly serve. Shuvalov saw in it the shipwreck of all his plans for peace, and Lord Salisbury's fears were enhanced by Lord Beaconsfield, who compared his arrival to a thunderbolt.<sup>2</sup>

First he visited Berlin, while Shuvalov was imploring Gorchakov to take measures in Berlin to see that the conversations between Bismarck and Gorchakov should not transpire in London.<sup>3</sup> Surrounded thus with a halo of mystery Ignatyev arrived on a Sunday night. The following day he was received by the Emperor and after dining with Prince Bismarck, had an interview with him which lasted from 2.30 till 10. Lord Odo Russell was at first only given to understand that this long conversation cemented the good relations between Russia and Germany, but the next day he had more detailed information to impart. He now knew that General Ignatyev had come to Berlin with definite proposals.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 7 March 1877.<sup>4</sup>—

"... General Ignatyev is going to propose that the Powers should sign a protocol recapitulating the points agreed to in the Conference, and inviting the Turkish Government to reconsider their decision.

In the event of a refusal the Powers would undertake to rediscuss among themselves other means of obtaining the desired improvement in the condition of the Christians.

The German Emperor and Prince Bismarck see no objection to this proposal and are willing to agree to it for the sake of peace, if the other Powers consent to support it."

This news had already been imparted to Lord Derby by Count

<sup>1</sup>*Slavonic Review* V. 191.

<sup>2</sup>Buckle; *Disraeli* VI. 127.

<sup>3</sup>*Slavonic Review* V. 195.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 876. No. 83.

Münster in the "strictest confidence," but the cautious Lord Derby had made an extremely reserved and discreet reply,<sup>1</sup> not committing himself an inch farther than he could see his way.

In the meantime Ignatyev had heard that his presence would be unwelcome in London,<sup>2</sup> and he took care to make this public in Berlin. To save a diplomatic incident Lord Odo Russell thought it well to mention that the report was "much commented upon and regretted in diplomatic circles." He himself had received a visit from Ignatyev at the Embassy and was greatly impressed by his pacific bearing and conciliatory language.<sup>3</sup> To this appeal Lord Derby, who indeed had not personally committed himself to the same extent as his colleagues, responded by authorizing Lord Odo Russell to contradict all such rumours, and to make it clear that he could come. The night before Ignatyev left Berlin there was a court reception, which Lord Odo attended, and where he was much struck by the general anxiety that prevailed with regard to the success of Ignatyev's mission. From the Emperor downwards, one person after another impressed upon him that peace or war between Russia and Turkey now lay entirely in the hands of Great Britain and all expressed the most earnest wish that she would prevent war by accepting the Russian proposals.<sup>4</sup> The Berlin Memorandum was still of recent memory. The Crown Princess showed the same anxiety in her correspondence with the Queen.<sup>5</sup>

In Paris Shuvalov and Ignatyev met, the latter saying with gratified pride that Bismarck would support the protocol in London. But Shuvalov was not so gratified on his return to discover that Bismarck's promise had apparently not been seriously meant. All had been disclosed, and the unfortunate Shuvalov, who had carefully planned his approach to the subject found Lord Derby in possession of all the facts, and full of arguments and objections. Instead of working upon Lord Derby's mind he had to listen while the British statesman explained that England did not like protocols and engagements, and would only enter upon them if they could be justified before the nation by

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 874. No. 77. To Lord Odo Russell. Secret. 6 March 1877.

<sup>2</sup>His source was probably Salisbury's wire.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 877. No. 82. To Lord Derby. Very Confidential. 6 March 1877.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* Nos. 87 and 88. To Lord Derby. Secret. 8 and 9 March 1877.

<sup>5</sup>Ponsonby: *Letters of the Empress Frederick*, 148.

the consolidation of peace. The implication, so unwelcome to Shuvalov, was that demobilization must be a *sine qua non* of the protocol. This was a situation for which poor Shuvalov had no instructions, and he could only reply evasively.<sup>1</sup> He did so, feeling bitterly in his heart that the suspicion he encountered in London that Bismarck was pushing Russia into war, was not without foundation. How otherwise could he account for Bismarck's indiscretion, and for the absence of that hearty support Ignatyev had been led to expect he would find from Count Münster? Münster, on the contrary, was entirely without instructions except in a general sense, and Shuvalov had to entreat him to ask for a more definite statement of policy, in view of Bismarck's recent assurances.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Salisbury had no more faith in Bismarck than Shuvalov, and firmly believed he was working for a general war, but Lord Odo Russell did not share these suspicions and did nothing to strengthen them. There was indeed common agreement that the central fact of the crisis was the state of raw tension between France and Germany—but Lord Odo interpreted it from the Berlin standpoint, which was that Germany, far from wishing to pounce on her neighbour, believed that the French rapprochement in Constantinople with Russia indicated that France was seeking an alliance to recover Alsace-Lorraine. As it was thought in Germany that France was massing an ever-larger army on her Eastern frontier, another war scare was inevitable unless German misgivings on that point were remembered. The military authorities at the moment were convinced that their suspicions in 1875 that the French army would be ready to attack in 1878 were confirmed. France, they were sure, was now ready to invade Alsace-Lorraine and could be ready within five days as against the ten required for German mobilization—hence the clamour, resisted so far by the Emperor owing to the influence of the Empress, for a strong force to defend Metz and Strassburg. But he would probably yield gradually, and in the meantime Prince Bismarck had decided that he must checkmate France's negotiations for "an offensive and defensive alliance with Russia by offering better terms to Russia for carrying out her Eastern policy, than she could hope to obtain from an al-

<sup>1</sup>*Slavonic Review* IV. p.754.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* pp.754-5.



liance with France." So the fear of a hostile coalition was temporarily averted and Russia's moral support again secured. The Ambassador found no desire for war among the German people, and the Emperor was equally pacific. Bismarck and Moltke did, indeed, regard war as inevitable unless the French army reorganization was dropped, but they would be careful not to repeat the error of 1875. "I therefore believe," he concluded, "that if France acts with tact, prudence and moderation for the next few years the threat of a second war will die out with Prince Bismarck and Count Moltke's tenure of office." He did not think there was any foundation for Shuvalov's fear that Bismarck would welcome a war in the East so that he might attack France with impunity in the West.

*To Lord Derby.* Most Confidential. 2 March 1877.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Count Shuvalov is an intimate friend of Prince Bismarck's and Prince Bismarck has often declared Count Shuvalov to be the only Russian after the Tsar in whom he has implicit confidence, and whom he would like to see as chancellor when Prince Gorchakov retires, so that Count Shuvalov is in a better position than most men to know the secrets of Prince Bismarck's future policy, but still I am inclined to believe that if Prince Bismarck desires a Turco-Russian war and consents to support it, his reasons are not so much to be sought in a wish to attack France without interference, as in the hope of preventing a Franco-Russian alliance which might be fatal to Germany. . . ."

Since the English press was reflecting these rumours and alarms, Bismarck began to think it time to issue a statement. On the same day that the German Ambassador called upon Lord Derby formally to contradict the report that Germany's intentions against France were hostile, Bülow drew Lord Odo Russell's attention to these rumours. He repeated what had been said so often before, that Germany had no desire to renew the struggle, and would only be drawn into it if France's suspicious attitude rendered it inevitable.<sup>2</sup> In this way Bismarck strove to allay British misgivings, but his own did not slumber. He told Hohenlohe, who was in Berlin, not to represent things in

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 877. No. 79.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 877. No. 108. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 17 March 1877.

too peaceful a light to the Emperor who, influenced by the Empress and Gontaut-Biron, was bitterly opposed to the increasing of the frontier forces lest the French should be alarmed. But Bismarck still believed that Metz was threatened,<sup>1</sup> and was quite as suspicious of British policy as Derby and Disraeli were of his. The refusal to accept the protocol without the impossible condition of demobilization seemed to him to be asking for trouble—the condition touched the national dignity of Russia too closely.<sup>2</sup> He told Lord Odo Russell that England must not demand too much from Germany, nor forget how long and exposed her Russian frontiers were. He could not by unwelcome proposals to Russia give her the opportunity of laying the faults of her own policy, such as mobilization, on others. A suggestion that a private interchange of letters between the Queen and the Emperor might help he brushed aside, seeing in it nothing but harm. Besides, Germany could never exert pressure on Russia to accept proposals which after the scornful attitude of Turkey would never be tolerated by the Russian people. Of course, in the event of war Germany would remain neutral and would influence Austria to do the same. Lord Odo Russell expressed the opinion that England would approve if Austria occupied territory to balance that of Russia. Bismarck, not knowing whether he spoke officially or not, and thinking that perhaps he was trying to draw him out, replied that Andrassy considered any advance of Russia as a calamity to Austria, but if it took place, Austria must contemplate taking some pledge, and that he had strengthened him in this opinion. It seemed to him that a line of demarkation, beyond which a war must not be allowed to spread, was fervently to be wished, he believed Austria shared this opinion, and hoped England wished it too. If he might make a suggestion, not as German minister, in which capacity he could give no such advice, but unofficially, he would wait. If the Russians met with great difficulties waiting alone would suffice, and even if they were very successful, England need not make war—why not have an agreement with Turkey to occupy the Dardanelles? With such a pledge they would have much better prospects in their relations with Russia than at present when each was afraid of the last word, and then Germany would have a

<sup>1</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 189.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 877. No. 109. To Lord Derby. 23 March 1877.

much better opportunity of offering her services. Turkey could remain peacefully in Constantinople for ever even if she had lost her European provinces. It would be no misfortune if the Dardanelles were in the hands of a Power doomed through weakness to neutrality, and with Asia Minor the Sultan would not have any material anxieties on the Bosphorus. In offering this advice, Bismarck said that he spoke as an amateur. As he left the last remark Lord Odo Russell made was that in London there had already been mourning for Bessarabia, which Bismarck thought he seemed to be confusing with the Dobrudja.<sup>1</sup>

While Bismarck was offering this unofficial advice Shuvalov was modifying the protocol to make it more acceptable to Great Britain. The golden bridge, it seemed, was to be built by Russian hands after all, for to the surprise and relief of Europe his efforts were crowned with success and on 31 March, the new protocol was signed,<sup>2</sup> but within a week there was another European sensation—Bismarck had once more resigned. He said his health was no longer able to stand the strain of office, and recommended von Camphausen (whom he had accused of working against him in 1876)<sup>3</sup> or Count Stolberg as his successor. It was known that he had refused the Emperor's offer of a year's leave, and the excitement of the political and diplomatic world was reflected in the press, which indulged "in every kind of fantastic comment on the crisis."<sup>4</sup> The suspense lasted a whole week but collapsed suddenly when it was announced that the resignation was withdrawn and that Bismarck would retire into the country with several months' sick leave.<sup>5</sup>

Lord Odo Russell was firmly of the opinion that Bismarck's nervousness and bad health were not feigned, and thought he badly needed rest. Without discounting this reason for the resignation he attributed it also to this irritation at the lack of support he received, which he blamed on to the Empress and the ultramontanes, "instead of simply attributing it to his very disagreeable manner of dealing with his Sovereign and his supporters and to the violence of his dealings with his oppon-

<sup>1</sup>Pol. Arch. D.A.A. Note by Bülow of conversation between Bismarck and Lord Odo Russell. Berlin, 25 March 1877.

<sup>2</sup>G.P. II. p.141.

<sup>3</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 181.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 877. No. 131. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 7 April 1877.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* No. 135. 10 April 1877.

ents. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there seems ample reason to believe that Bismarck had a morbid fear of interference with his policy. Goriainov suggests that before the conference Bülow was authorized to hand in his resignation if the attempt of the Empress and the Crown Prince and Princess to persuade the Emperor to intervene with the Tsar in the interests of peace and civilization was successful<sup>2</sup>—without committing ourselves too deeply to this view, it must be noted that Bismarck himself declared later, "I ought to have gone in 1877,"<sup>3</sup> but nevertheless he remained in office to take responsibility for the difficult days which were to follow.

<sup>1</sup>Ponsonby: *Letters of the Empress Frederick*, 149.

<sup>2</sup>Goriainov. p.338.

<sup>3</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 302.

## THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR

[1877-8]

*Nothing more is to be hoped from the Conference Chamber—we must adjourn to the Battle-field.*

*The Outbreak of the War.*—Position in Berlin—difference of view between the Emperor and Bismarck—visit of Gontaut-Biron to Metz—Bülow's assurances to Russell—British suspicions of Prince Reuss's activities in Constantinople—Shuvalov's visit to Berlin—French intrigues—Lord Odo Russell's survey of the situation.

*Bismarck's Overtures to Great Britain.*—Lord Odo Russell on leave—his desire for close co-operation with Germany—cool reception by Lord Derby—the Queen's attitude—progress of the war—Lord Odo Russell's instructions—return to Berlin—Bismarck's policy modified—conversation with Lord Odo Russell—Bismarck's belief that war must be fought to a decision—obscurity of the situation—Russell's desire to see a more energetic policy pursued by Great Britain.

*Bismarck in Retirement.*—Dissatisfaction of Lord Beaconsfield—Russell in England—interview with the Prime Minister at Woburn Abbey—return to Berlin—exchange of views with Bülow—the autumn crisis—imminent collapse of Turkey—danger of change of government in France—Beaconsfield's policy—cabinet dissensions—Bismarck's refusal of Turkish request for mediation—fall of Plevna—Russell's report on the situation—close of the year.

## I

THE Powers were agreed at last on the much-diluted physic to be administered to the "Sick Man," but found the patient quite as unwilling to swallow it as ever, and force became necessary after all. On 24 April, 1877, the Russo-Turkish war began. In Berlin the situation was no less obscure than it had been in January, and Lord Odo Russell was conscious of a marked difference of opinion between the Emperor and Bis-

marck. The Chancellor, having thought out the question in all its bearings, was not prepared to accept the responsibility for anything but a policy of strict neutrality, and was as deaf to the strong anti-Turkish clamour of the public as to the imperial prayers that Germany should stand behind Russia in her fight for Christianity.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck was taking account of the policy of other interested Powers, and until he knew better what they were going to do he felt it was not for the Power with the most exposed boundaries and with an implacable foe, to move. The military party were prepared for anything, the army organization was strengthened by the appointment of an additional captain to each regiment, and Moltke, still dreaming of a preventive war, took the opportunity of the Reichstag debate to alarm public opinion by painting in lurid colours the menace that lay behind the rapid reorganization of the French army, but he was careful to explain that all he demanded was a sufficient measure for defence "the better to secure the maintenance of peace in the future."<sup>2</sup> In this critical state of affairs Lord Odo Russell could only confirm the suspicion that the Emperor's affection for his nephew would find expression in active support were Russia victorious or not, but he reported that the attitude of Great Britain was still regarded with equal suspicion in Berlin. Lord Derby's reply to the circular Gorchakov had issued was regarded as a sign that Great Britain was prepared to take the great risk, and this impression was confirmed by persistent rumours of active war preparations in England. Lord Odo Russell was continually beset with anxious inquirers. His invariable reply was, "While H.M.G. desire to reserve their liberty of action, and to be neutral, they must at the same time be prepared to defend the interests of England if ever they should be threatened in Asia or Egypt on the Bosphorus or elsewhere."<sup>3</sup>

In such an atmosphere the sudden and mysterious visit of the French Ambassador to the Emperor of Germany could not but excite comment. Lord Odo reported a rumour that the visit was being utilized by the French Government to convey to the Emperor the information that, in the event of war between England and Russia, France would be ready to join Germany in

<sup>1</sup>F. O. 64. 877. No. 153. To Lord Derby. Very Confidential. 20 April 1877.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 168. Confidential. 27 April 1877.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 191. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 9 May 1877.

support of Russia against England, but added, "I believe this report to be utterly unfounded and untrue."<sup>1</sup>

Exactly what did transpire at Metz is obscure, but it was sufficient to cause Bismarck profound disquiet.<sup>2</sup> His never-slumbering mistrust of Gontaut-Biron was only exceeded by his conviction that Decazes was a past-master in the arts of intrigue, and he dreaded lest reports of what had happened should complicate the diplomatic web, which was far too tangled already, and make it still more difficult for Germany to preserve the strict neutrality he considered essential in the best interests of his country. Knowing that the Emperor laid the responsibility of the war on the shoulders of the Power that had refused to sign the Berlin Memorandum,<sup>3</sup> and determined to prevent any possibility of misunderstanding with a Power that might soon declare war, he sent a "secret and private" message to Lord Odo Russell from his retreat at Friedrichsruhe imploring him to give no credence to any rumours that the Emperor had criticized British policy and praised that of the French. He gave the strongest assurances that the Emperor strenuously denied having expressed any such opinions, for "he feared that persons anxious to sow discord between England and Germany would turn these false reports to account." Bülow, who delivered the message, so different in tone from the message he had been charged with the previous autumn, added that England and Germany were "natural allies," and that Bismarck's last words to him before he left Berlin were "to remember that the basis of his policy was and ever would be an alliance with England and that he should never cease to work towards its complete realization." The criticism of English policy which had been attributed to the Emperor had its origin not at Metz, but in Paris, its object being to isolate England and to enable France to act with Russia and Germany, an object that would never be fulfilled while Bismarck was Chancellor.<sup>4</sup> But while Britain could have had an alliance with Germany she was making overtures to Austria whose policy was already decided by secret treaties.

Although Bismarck stressed his desire to act with Great

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 192. *Ibid.* Secret. 10 May 1877.

<sup>2</sup>A good account is given by Mr. Carter in the *American Historical Review*. XXIX. pp.288-293.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. II. p.145.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 204. To Lord Derby. Secret. 17 May 1877.

Britain, Prince Reuss was doing little to allay British suspicions of German policy in Constantinople. He had complained to Berlin that Layard was responsible for the difficulties he found in assuming the protectorate over Russian subjects and interests. The two ambassadors indeed found it very hard to get on together. Layard could never forget that Prince Reuss was connected with the Russian imperial family, and Prince Reuss was convinced that Layard was "hostile to and always warning Turkey against the German Government." The happy contrast in the relations between Lord Odo Russell and Bülow made it possible for the latter to mention the subject in confidence to the British Ambassador. Bülow had never had cause to suspect Layard of anti-German sympathies at Madrid, and he now invited a friendly denial of the accusation, and expressed himself as perfectly reassured when Russell asserted that Layard, who was a personal friend of his, "would always wish to act in Constantinople as he had acted in Madrid, in concert and harmony with Germany and German colleagues."<sup>1</sup> But though Bülow hoped the whole subject might be forgotten the relations between the British and German Embassies in Constantinople remained far from cordial.

In Friedrichsruhe Bismarck was visited by Shuvalov, who came to discuss Lord Derby's note. Lord Odo Russell was given to understand that the Emperor was not prepared to commit himself so far as the navigation of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus was concerned as this question might touch the interests of other Powers, but he could not find out whether this was his own personal opinion or that of Bismarck. He very well remembered Bismarck's standpoint in 1870, when he had been perfectly willing to contemplate the freedom of the Straits if Russia and Turkey agreed, on condition that Germany were compensated with a coaling station for her navy on the Black Sea. "But Bismarck may have altered his opinion since thence," he added, "for he was not as well disposed towards England seven years ago as he is now."<sup>2</sup>

Gontaut-Biron's mysterious visit to Metz was immediately followed by a French warning to Lord Derby that Bismarck was only waiting for the British forces to be busy in the East to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 205. To Lord Derby. Secret. 17 May 1877.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 206. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 18 May 1877.



pounce upon France in the West, destroy her utterly and then in all probability, annex Bohemia and Holland. Although not a new story, Lord Derby was the more inclined to credit it as Bismarck's policy since the conference had been so difficult to follow, but Lord Odo Russell had no compunction in pricking this swollen bubble of mingled terror and intrigue.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 19 May 1877.<sup>1</sup>—

"... It is thought that France will attack Germany from Belfort and through Belgium, hence the greater concentration of troops in Alsace and at Münster. Hence also the advice given by Prince Bismarck to the King of the Belgians to be prepared to resist a French invasion. The acquisition of Holland is not more thought of in Germany or contemplated by Prince Bismarck than it is in England by Her Majesty's Government. The idea reminds me of the deep-rooted conviction I so often met with in Italy and among the Frenchmen that England coveted the possession of Sicily.

On the other hand, the acquisition of Bohemia, and of the German province of Austria would be seriously taken into consideration if Austria, ceasing to be the ally she now is, of Germany and Austria, attempted to be independent and sought other alliances.

The fear expressed by the Duc Decazes that Prince Bismarck would begin to move in the West if the disposable forces of England should sail for the East appears to me unfounded. I think on the contrary that it is to secure peace for Germany and security against anti-German alliances that Prince Bismarck wishes the disposable forces of the Powers to be well occupied in Turkey.

His illness and irritability are partly due to the fear, ever present in his mind, that his work—the unity of Germany—could not resist a Franco-Russian alliance or a coalition of Catholic Power, which he dreads even more. Count Shuvalov, who saw him at Friedrichsruhe on the 13th inst. confided to me that he had been as much struck as I and others had been at the constant anxiety with which these political phantoms fill the great Chancellor's mind.

They rise before him as he says himself in sleepless nights when he thinks over the appalling weakness of the geographical position of the German Empire.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 211.

A glance at the map of Europe will show that Germany since she cut Austria adrift in 1866 is at the mercy of her neighbours if ever they should combine to attack her simultaneously.

Unlike other countries the new empire in the centre of Europe has not a single defence to fall back upon and her frontiers are open all round to invasion, so she is dependent solely on her military organization against the revenge of her former victims, France, Austria, Denmark and the Pope.

I have myself heard the Emperor, Prince Bismarck, Count Moltke and other high leading authorities deplore the weakness of Germany in earnest and anxious language, and I have even heard it admitted since the 'scare' in 1875 that for years to come the first condition of the very existence of Germany must be the alliance with Russia.

This state of things has probably suggested to Prince Bismarck the thought that if he could but interest and occupy the Powers in the settlement of the Eastern Question they would, for the present at least, leave Germany alone. Germany having no direct interest in Turkey it is a matter of indifference to him how the question is settled, so long as the Powers interested find a solution that will really give peace to Germany and Europe.

If that end could only be attained through a redistribution of territory, Prince Bismarck would, as he says himself, be equally agreeable to oblige his friends at the expense of the Sultan by supporting their respective wishes; so long as such redistribution became a real guarantee of a sound and lasting peace.

For a long time as Your Lordship is aware Prince Bismarck flattered himself that a sound and lasting settlement of the Oriental Question could be more rapidly achieved through an Anglo-German alliance than through any other. Besides which an alliance with England would relieve Germany from the Russian protectorate under which she has groaned so long and give her the much longed for liberty to control, check or oppose Russia at pleasure. But that was not to be, and so having failed to substitute an English for a Russian alliance, he found himself reluctantly compelled to adhere to Russia as heretofore, and save Germany from the danger of a Franco-Russian alliance with which Prince Gorchakov had threatened him at the time of the 'scare' in 1875, when Russia gave practical proof of her power to impose peace on Germany by moral pressure only.

After struggling in vain to throw off that power Prince Bismarck has been finally obliged to give in and submit to the necessity of continual subserviency to Russia for the sake and safety of Germany.

To Russia therefore he has promised the sanction and support of Germany in carrying out her Eastern policy and Russia in turn adheres to her old family alliance with Germany, so that Prince Bismarck is relieved of his Franco-Russian incubus and feels safe in the North.

But he would feel safer still if he could find occupation for the Powers of the West and South by diverting their thoughts from Germany and awakening their interest in the redistribution of power in Turkey—not as the Duc Decazes thinks, that Germany may move in the West with impunity, while England sends her disposable forces to the East, but on the contrary to secure for Germany the peace she stands so much in need of to recover from the effects of the last three wars to consolidate her new empire. Prince Bismarck's policy when peace negotiations commence will therefore probably be to sound the Powers secretly as to their wishes and intimate his readiness to favour them if possible.

To England he has already recommended the occupation of Egypt . . . he has since expressed his anxious hope that England may be some day induced to add Syria, Crete, Cyprus etc. to her eastern possessions.

To Austria he has said in confidence that she would do wisely to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and any other provinces of European Turkey she may fancy.

Italy he is not much inclined to favour but would not object to her acquiring a portion of Tripoli if necessary.

France, he says, has already taken possession of her inheritance in the shape of Algeria, but he would help her to add Tunis if France could divert her thoughts from Germany and revenge for the next few years.

I have heard Prince Bismarck say that if the Powers decided on keeping the Sultan in Europe a very small amount of territory around Constantinople would suffice for his wants—as Cavour used to say of the temporal power of the Popes—'Rome and a garden.'

If on the other hand the Powers decided on sending the Sultan to Asia, he thought Smyrna or Broussa too near, but Mosul or Bagdad well suited for His Majesty's capital or residence.

Of course all these plans which I have heard him discuss have

been thrown out under some passing impulse, and Prince Bismarck will give them up or vary them according to circumstances over and over again. Suffice it therefore to say that he is quite ready to divide Turkey for the sake of keeping Germany together.

On the other hand the Powers may not be equally ready for the division and Russia for one has no idea of going to war to get provinces out of the fire for the neutral Powers.

In the end Prince Bismarck will be principally guided by the wishes of Russia in the settlement of the Turkish question, the only interest he really has at heart in the present crisis being the maintenance of peace for Germany. . . ."

Lord Odo Russell's exhaustive summary of Bismarck's policy was wasted, for Lord Beaconsfield was now decided upon his own, which was to secure for Britain a "commanding position" when the time for making peace should come, and he thought that position could best be attained by direct influence on the Porte,<sup>1</sup> and though Bismarck took the trouble to see Lord Odo Russell twice on his way from Friedrichsruhe to Kissingen, no response was made to his advances. But his action may be taken as the measure of his anxiety for the future. He hoped to check the intrigues of the French and to see them estranged from England.<sup>2</sup> He therefore again warned Lord Odo Russell that there was no truth in their representations that he was dissatisfied with the policy of H.M.G., deplored the unpleasant necessity of increasing the garrisons of Alsace-Lorraine, and reaffirmed his assertion that Germany was a saturated state—her one desire was for peace to "consolidate her new institutions, increase her wealth and develop the prosperity of the nation." With regard to Russia no secret understanding existed and while he sympathized with her he would join no coalition for any particular purpose, and hoped the other Powers would not join a coalition against Germany. "Above all he wished to keep on terms of friendship and good-will with England and to join with H.M.G. in taking advantage of the earlier opportunity to facilitate the re-establishment of peace between Russia and Turkey."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 142.

<sup>2</sup>G.P. I. p.317.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 878. Nos. 215 Secret and 217. To Lord Derby. 22 and 25 May 1877.

## II

Lord Odo Russell was about to proceed to London. Just before his departure Bismarck invited him to his house and again impressed upon him his fervent desire to act with England to establish and maintain European peace. He had read Lord Derby's note and entirely agreed with it and at the same time was pleased with Shuvalov's moderate and statesmanlike attitude. With these two auguries he hoped much from Shuvalov's visit to Constantinople. Dismissing the remote possibility of Anglo-Russian conflict in Egypt and on the Persian Gulf, the only two difficulties were Constantinople and the navigation of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. Bismarck was quite prepared to support Shuvalov's suggestions that hostilities should cease and that peace negotiations should begin as soon as possible after crossing the Danube if a victory were won by Russia North of the Balkans. Failing victory, if crossing the Balkans became necessary, Bismarck hoped a further attempt for peace would be made before reaching Adrianople, for an approach to Constantinople would indeed render a general war probable. These considerations led him earnestly to desire that Britain's warning should be followed up by an occupation of the Dardanelles that Russia's advance to Constantinople might be checked and peace thereby brought nearer. He promised to support H.M.G. with the utmost German moral influence to keep the peace. In making peace between Russia and Turkey he would support any proposals calculated to lead to a lasting pacification. He did not think the improvement of the lot of the Christians would afford much difficulty since the subject had been so recently threshed out at Constantinople, but other conditions would depend on the result of the war. Neither "Austria nor Germany would object if Russia claimed Bessarabia, but the question of the Straits could not be so easily settled with the other guaranteeing Powers." Above all Germany owing Russia a great debt would do anything to promote a "cordial and lasting understanding between England and Russia to which Germany would become a party," and he commissioned Russell to try and bring about "an intimate and lasting alliance between England

and Germany," and if this desired result came about he hoped Lord Odo would go and see him immediately, wherever he might be.<sup>1</sup>

And so Lord Odo Russell came to London a month after the war had broken out, prepared to work for an intimate understanding between England and Germany for the peaceful settlement of the Eastern Question, but his hopes were soon dashed to the ground. So far from his own despatches having calmed the fears of his countrymen he found the public mind obsessed with ridiculous terrors of imaginary plots of Bismarck against Holland. Lord Derby showed no anxiety whatever to see him and in one brief interview merely remarked that he "supposed he had 'nothing to say' to him,"<sup>2</sup> since from their regular correspondence he had "little to learn as to the views entertained by Lord Odo Russell."<sup>3</sup> He knew well that these views embraced an understanding with Germany, but he thought he saw that Bismarck's motive was "a scarcely disguised wish . . . to push England into a quarrel with Russia,"<sup>4</sup> and as moreover he knew, as Lord Odo Russell did not, that secret overtures were being made by H.M.G. to Austria, he had good reason for not wishing the interview to be prolonged. He utterly mistrusted Bismarck and was not prepared to put the same construction on his policy towards France as the Ambassador, but was rather inclined to think the French had some grounds for their apprehensions, therefore as far as he was concerned, Lord Odo Russell found the soil was absolutely sterile.

Disappointed at Lord Derby's lack of interest, Russell went to Balmoral where the signs were much more favourable. Nothing could have been more different than the contrast between the attitude of the Queen and that of Lord Derby. She drank in eagerly all Lord Odo had to say, paled with apprehension as he pictured the readiness of Russia, and saw in her fevered imagination the Russians firmly settled in Constantinople. Like Lord Derby, she could not mention the Austrian negotiations, but as Russell unfolded Bismarck's proposals and as he backed them

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 878. No. 221. To Lord Derby. Secret. 27 May 1877.

<sup>2</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 143.

<sup>3</sup>Q.V. II. 542.

<sup>4</sup>But he was nevertheless mistaken. Bismarck thought an agreement between England and Russia necessary for Germany. G.P. II. p.153.

with his own support, saying Europe was only waiting for England to move, and emphasizing that in any case there was an understanding between the three Northern Powers to be taken into account, the secret proposal to Austria lay heavy on her mind. "She feels sure Bismarck will hear of it," she wrote, "and that it would be unwise not to carry him with us."<sup>1</sup> The following day, still in an agitated frame of mind, she wrote to Lord Derby, imploring him and Lord Beaconsfield to see Lord Odo Russell, pointing out three undeniable facts—Austria's understanding with the other Powers, the impossibility therefore of keeping Bismarck in the dark, and the inevitability of his resentment at such a want of frankness in view of his repeated offers to act with England. She quoted Lord Odo Russell's words and supported them with all the weight of her royal authority.<sup>2</sup> Whatever her mistrust of Bismarck had been Russell had succeeded in dispelling it, even to convincing her that he had no designs on Holland.<sup>3</sup>

Lord Derby was no more to be moved by the Queen's prayer for action than Bismarck had been a month previously by the Emperor's wish to support Russia. He was quite willing to see Lord Odo again, but was obviously convinced that he had nothing to learn from him. Forward action to him implied war in which England would be without allies, while her opponent could reckon on the support of her two military neighbours.<sup>4</sup> Lord Derby could not have expressed more clearly his entire disbelief in Bismarck's sincerity, but his attitude filled Lord Odo Russell with apprehension and alarm.<sup>5</sup>

Events in the Balkans now moved rapidly. In the third week of June the Danube was crossed, a rapid march southwards was begun, and Bismarck in Kissingen and the British Government in London had to face the prospect of the Southern Balkans being entirely at the mercy of victorious Russia. In these circumstances Lord Odo Russell again saw Lord Derby and had a "satisfactory" interview with

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 143-4.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. 540.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. II. 153. n.

<sup>4</sup>Q.V. II. 542.

<sup>5</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 143.

Lord Beaconsfield.<sup>1</sup> He was given verbal instructions to take back to Berlin.

Lord Derby wished him to fathom Bismarck's views of the Russian peace proposals, as confidentially communicated by Shuvalov on 8 June and Lord Beaconsfield instructed him to point out that "two of the most important questions for England were those concerning Constantinople and the Straits, and that H.M.G. reckoned on the support of Germany in maintaining the sovereignty of the Sultan at Constantinople and the principles which regulated the navigation of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles," and that Lord Beaconsfield "was prepared to advise H.M. the Queen to send the fleet to Gallipoli, not necessarily to encourage or coerce the belligerents, but to be present on the spot and ready to guard and maintain the interests of England when the day of settlement was at hand."<sup>2</sup> But a great deal had happened since Bismarck had made his offer a few weeks before. He was as anxious to see Lord Odo Russell as ever, but it was evident that a deep change had come over his views, and as the Chancellor and the Ambassador walked up and down the garden of the Wilhelmstrasse, discussing the European situation it became clear to Lord Odo that Bismarck no longer had any hope that peace would be concluded before the Russians crossed the Balkans, and that he had come round to the belief that Russia and Turkey must be allowed to fight the matter out before any lasting settlement could be made.<sup>3</sup> He found him very guarded in his replies to question and requests. Of course he would support any terms of peace on which England and Austria were agreed, but he feared Turkey would not yet be reasonable; he would equally do all he could to get England and Russia to agree, but could not commit himself to any definite statement until he knew H.M.G.'s views on the peace proposals, which seemed to him quite sincere, and therefore he invited a detailed answer to which he promised his full support. On the question of the Dardanelles he seemed to have entirely changed his policy. He said plainly that, desirable as such a step might be later, at the present juncture it could only encourage the Turks and lengthen the war. As a measure of pacification it was bound

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 148.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 280. To Lord Derby. Secret. 6 July 1877.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 283. To Lord Derby. Secret. 9 July 1877.



to fail as the quarrel must first be fought out. He had no reason to doubt Russia's good faith and believed Shuvalov's promises to the fullest extent. He assured Lord Odo that Russia was anxious to keep on good terms with Great Britain so that any counter-proposals England might make would receive a sympathetic hearing, and he would do all in his power to render them acceptable. Yet once again he protested that all insinuations of German designs on Holland or Bohemia were mere fabrications of his enemies, though "if the interests of great nations required the annexations of territory he was the first to approve and he had therefore heard with surprise from Count Münster that H.M.G. were averse to taking possession of the road to India through Egypt which in the interest of Great Britain and of the commercial world should in his opinion be now transferred from the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey to that of the Empress of India."<sup>1</sup> He elaborated this idea under the garden trees. Turkey once defeated, Russia and Austria might be able to divide up her European possessions, England should secure the road to India and France could take something in the East. Germany wanted peace and nothing else. He had seen newspaper reports of an Anglo-Austrian alliance—any such anti-Russian alliance was useless for the moment. Austria's policy was to prevent the formation of a big Slav state, and to this end she must either quarrel with Russia which would be dangerous, or else increase her own territory which would be safer. Neutrality was the best policy now both for England and Austria. They could step in later and "secure their interests by mediation, negotiations or occupation according to circumstances." The time to stop the war had passed and matters were not yet ripe for interference, later Austrian troops could "march into Bosnia and English ships sail up the Dardenelles and facilitate the conclusion of a lasting and satisfactory settlement if necessary. . . ."

Finally he touched upon France. On this subject at least his feelings and policy had undergone no change, and here he could see nothing but the black clouds of ultramontane intrigue, and anticipated that this force would probably be strong enough to "attack Germany before a twelve months was over; the president of a thriving republic who was mad enough to make the *coup d'état* of 16 May last would be equally capable of rushing into a

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 280. To Lord Derby. Secret. 6 July 1877.

war of revenge, and madame la Maréchale was as much an ultra-montane as the Empress Eugénie."

This was the last conversation Lord Odo Russell was to have with Bismarck for four months. Pondering over the change of view the chancellor had expressed, he could only account for it by supposing that he wished to discourage an Anglo-Austrian understanding "lest it might diminish his personal influence later on and impede the progress of Russia sooner than would suit his ambitious plans."<sup>1</sup> With regard to Egypt Lord Odo Russell found himself more in agreement with Bismarck than with his own government,<sup>2</sup> but indeed throughout the whole crisis he was in favour of a much more active policy than Lord Derby saw fit to adopt.

## III

Bismarck went once more into retirement but not into inaction. Lord Odo Russell was privately informed that Andrassy had consulted him about the proposed alliance with England, and that he had advised him "to encourage the overtures of England and ascertain the exact terms to which H.M.G. would consent when peace negotiations commenced, but he advised him at the same time not to let the agreement interfere with the progress of the war until it came to natural termination by the defeat of Turkey. He thought the united action of Austria and England might be beneficially exercised in the interests of a lasting settlement. . . . Since the Russian army had crossed the Danube the understanding between the military empires had become closer and the 'lasting settlement' was likely to mean the partition of the Turkish Empire in Europe."<sup>3</sup>

Hardly had this despatch gone when Russell was told by Lord Derby that Count Beust officially denied the existence of any secret understanding "other than that which results from the despatches and telegrams already communicated to H.M.G." but he was too well-informed to accept this denial at its face

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 283. To Lord Derby. Secret. 9 July 1877.

<sup>2</sup>G.P. II. p. 157.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 285. To Lord Derby. Secret. 14 July 1877.

value. He replied that in that it resulted from open telegrams it was not secret but the renewal of the pledges and Germany's acceptance of them made the understanding more intimate and it also implied that the partition of Turkey could not be far distant. Although Austria might not be anxious to annex Turkish territory it was more to her interest than a quarrel with Russia and it was only in case Russia was not sincere that Austria would need British help. This accounted for Andrassy's non-committal attitude. And then Lord Odo Russell could not refrain from hinting that a more energetic foreign policy might be wise. "The Northern allies, having failed to obtain the co-operation of H.M.G. in carrying out the 'efficacious measures' foreshadowed from the beginning, are fully aware of the danger to their plans of an English intervention while they are themselves carrying them into effect and therefore seek to encourage the prolongation of English neutrality by vague and general offers of future support until the war is over, when they flatter themselves they can safely invite the guaranteeing Powers to assist in the regulation of 'accomplished facts' as far at least as Austria and Russia will be concerned.

"The Northern Powers seem almost to forget that the Turkish question cannot be settled without the consent of H.M.G."<sup>1</sup> This was a broad hint, but it did not have the desired effect on the Foreign Office.

While the Turks were holding Russia at bay in the south the summer months were passing uneasily by in the north, and Lord Odo Russell was kept busy inquiring into rumours of German partiality for Russia. He had no hesitation in denying a report that Bismarck was trying to persuade Russia to break her Austrian agreement,<sup>2</sup> nor did he confirm Layard's information that Germany was inciting Greece to attack Turkey. He quite understood that Germany hoped for a Russian victory, but saw no evidence that any good was to be gained by inciting lesser powers to war.<sup>3</sup> Bismarck's anxieties, on the other hand, seemed to be lightened. At the end of August he passed through Berlin on his way from Varzin to Gastein. Lord Odo Russell did not see him but heard that there was a great change in the Chancellor

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 291. To Lord Derby. Secret. 20 July 1877.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 879. No. 303. To Lord Derby. Most Confidential. 3 August 1877.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 315. Secret. 10 August 1877.

since April; he was relieved at the turn affairs had taken and at what he called "the success of his policy in urging Russia to go to war and Austria to keep out of it," for it had paralysed the military power of Russia as an ally of France and an enemy of Germany with which Gorchakov had threatened him since 1875.<sup>1</sup>

In England anti-Russian feeling had become almost an obsession with the Queen and hardly less so with Lord Beaconsfield. Although Lord Odo had repeatedly urged the necessity of a stronger lead from London, this did not carry any weight with the Prime Minister, who, thoroughly dissatisfied with the whole situation, vented his spleen on the entire diplomatic service. ". . . I wish we could get rid of the whole lot. They seem to me to be quite useless. It is difficult to control events, but none of them try to. I think Odo Russell the worst of all. He contents himself with reporting all Bismarck's cynical bravadoes, which he evidently listens to in an ecstasy of sycophantic wonder.

"Why does he not try to influence Bismarck as the Prince controls him? Why does he not impress on Bis, for example, that if Germany and Austria police Poland, in order that Russia should add 500,000 men to her legions, England will look upon that as a gross breach of neutrality?

"Why does he not confidentially impress upon Bismarck that Turkey has shown such vigour and resource that she has established her place among the sovereign Powers of Europe, and that if they continue to play their dark game of partition they must come in collision with England, who will not permit the breaking up of the Ottoman Empire?"<sup>2</sup>

Lord Beaconsfield was unfortunate in the moment he chose to tirade—Lord Odo Russell had not seen Bismarck for weeks and at the time when these strictures were being written he was already on his way to England. The peevish Prime Minister met the Ambassador on 17 October. Together with Lord Lyons they were the guests of Lord Odo Russell's brother, the Duke of Bedford. Their conversations were long, but not very satisfactory, for Lord Beaconsfield was in no mood to listen to unpalatable truths, and dismissed both ambassadors' summaries of

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 331. Confidential. 24 August 1877.

<sup>2</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 178.

the European situation with the contemptuous reflection that they were "both cowed by Prince Bismarck." Lord Odo told him that "Bismarck would consent to peace, provided Russia had obtained some signal success. He did not wish her to be too much humiliated." He again affirmed that there was a close understanding between the three Northern Powers, and that Bismarck was consulted about everything, but in his opinion Bismarck would in no circumstances interfere actively in the war against Turkey. The Emperor wished it, but it was contrary to the sense of public opinion in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Beaconsfield was always reluctant to realize that his policy had not shattered the *Drei-Kaiser-Bund*. Indeed, he based his plans on the assumption that it was a thing of the past. Three weeks previously he had advocated mediation between Russia and Turkey on the basis of a settlement of Bulgaria according to the terms of the London protocol and the cession of Bessarabia to Russia, a refusal of these terms on Bismarck's part to be made a *casus belli*, and now it was not pleasant to hear that Russia would have the best of reasons for rejecting these terms.

Lord Odo Russell returned to Berlin on 24 November, gravely concerned about British policy. Two days later he had a long interview with Bülow in which they exchanged views on the situation as it then appeared.<sup>2</sup> Russell told Bülow that Beaconsfield felt called upon to do something startling to save Turkey and vindicate British interests and that he was fanning the flame of the Queen's mistrust of the Tsar. He had told him himself that if peace were not made before the spring Britain would have to interfere, but he had not found Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury of this opinion.

Lord Odo Russell had left England far more in sympathy with the views of the opposition, who greatly deplored the warlike attitude of the Court and were prepared to oppose the breaking of the peace by every means in their power. Nobody could predict whether they would be successful or not, for a single

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 188-9.

<sup>2</sup>There are two accounts of this important conversation—Bülow's memorandum in the German foreign archives (hitherto unpublished) and Lord Odo Russell's despatch to Lord Derby. The two accounts supplement and are quite consistent with each other, so that we have a very full account of Lord Odo's position and opinions at the moment.

event, such as the capture of Adrianople or an approach to Constantinople might precipitate a storm. He himself thought that few British interests as outlined by Lord Derby to Shuvalov at the outbreak of war had been threatened. The Persian Gulf and Egypt were not in danger—and he added incidentally that Lord Beaconsfield wanted the *status quo* maintained in Egypt chiefly because there was danger that otherwise it would lead to a lengthy estrangement from France. There was no difficulty about the independence of Roumania and Serbia—but for the integrity and sovereignty of Turkey, Britain would be prepared to fight. Here Lord Odo Russell saw two great dangers from which there seemed no escape—the question of the Dardanelles and the position of Bulgaria. In British eyes an occupation of the Dardanelles and the loss of Bulgaria would be equivalent to the break-up of Turkey. He personally believed this must happen in any case, and that Turkey must be in a worse state than before the war. In England people thought otherwise and called him Russian but he said, “As soon as they could prove to him that Turkish victory would lead to peace, he would become Turkophil—until then he hoped for Russian victories in order to bring about peace.” He did not think England would easily make concessions so far as the northern part of Bulgaria was concerned—autonomy to a certain extent might be accepted, but not in the sense that Gorchakov seemed to understand it.

He had found no settled policy with regard to the Dardanelles, and Lord Derby had actually asked him what proposal he could make but when he replied that it would be possible following the example of the Suez Canal to make a trade route from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean, to strengthen Turkish finances by means of a tariff, and to exclude or limit foreign warships, Lord Derby had replied, “That will never do.”

On certain matters Lord Odo Russell had nothing to say. Bülow noted that the mouth of the Danube, Bessarabia, the Dobrudja and Montenegro were not mentioned, but somehow he received the impression that on such points as these England would act with Austria. As far as Russia's peace terms were concerned he thought the British Government would give much to know exactly what she would demand. It was evidently known that there was a strong party in favour of peace, but nothing

definite about the anxieties of the Tsar and those at headquarters. Lord Odo Russell did not appear to be aware of any attempts of Layard and Serva Pasha for mediation or else, thought Bülow, he did not wish to appear to know anything. He dismissed them as of no importance, but agreed that if there were anything in them Prince Reuss's attitude had been correct and consistent with the policy of the German Government. Germany could not, if Russia put forth terms of peace in the middle of a campaign, know them any more than England. The British Government was always ready for mediation, but the moment was difficult to find.<sup>1</sup>

On his part Bülow discussed Franco-German relations. He warned Lord Odo Russell that Germany regarded the recent change of government with alarm. Bismarck made no secret of his conviction that a royal or imperial restoration implied the necessity of a war of revenge.<sup>2</sup>

This conversation epitomized British apprehensions and German fears. In England the vital fact was the imminent collapse of Turkey, in Germany it was the threatened fall of the French republic, and both countries were shaping their policy accordingly. Bismarck, resolved to take no step at this juncture that might embroil him with Russia, refused to discuss the question of mediation lest he should seem to be pleading the Turkish cause, and Count Münster was informed that the points at issue were too divergent to render mediation desirable.<sup>3</sup> France was warned that MacMahon's retirement or the establishment of a clerical ministry would inevitably lead to war.<sup>4</sup> The French Government hinted that Bismarck was actually considering buying her off with a bargain—the old story—Belgium for France, Holland for Germany—but nothing could make Russell believe in such a compact. The only bargain Bismarck had ever led him to believe he would consider was contained in the words: "If France would be conciliated and occupied out of Europe by annexations in the East, such as Tunis, he would not object."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Pol. Arch. D.A.A. Vertrauliche Äusserungen des englischen Botschafters über den russisch-türkischen Krieg, Berlin, 26 November 1877.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 430a. To Lord Derby. Secret. 26 November 1877.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. II. pp. 160-1.

<sup>4</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons* II. 120.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 449. To Lord Derby. Secret. 8 December 1877.

The actual fall of Plevna afforded Lord Beaconsfield the opportunity of giving concrete expression to the policy he thought it in British interests to adopt. Parliament was to be called immediately, the armed forces of the Crown were to be increased, and negotiations for mediation between Turkey and Russia were to begin.<sup>1</sup> These proposals were made the day after Lord Odo Russell reported that the Emperor saw no likelihood of peace as Russia was determined to carry on the war beyond the Balkans, and on the very day the Cabinet met in London it was known in Berlin that Turkey had appealed to the guaranteeing Powers for mediation.<sup>2</sup> Lord Odo Russell's conviction that the attempt would find no sympathy in Germany was correct.<sup>3</sup> The whole situation was transformed in the light of these events, and by the sudden entry of Serbia into the war. Alarmist reports were spread in Constantinople that Greece was being pushed into war in order to embarrass Turkey still further. The German Government officially denied this, but Russell believed "that Germany would be glad of the territorial aggrandizement of Greece, not as a means of assisting Russia, but as a step towards the civilization of the East."<sup>4</sup>

While Lord Beaconsfield was playing with the idea of forcing his policy by a collusive resignation<sup>5</sup> Bismarck was trying to coerce his sovereign by the same means, but both statesmen avoided taking the extreme step. The immediate problem was that of mediation. Bismarck advised the Porte to appeal direct to Russia, but Sadoullah Bey, probably counting on Lord Odo Russell's sympathy, confided to him that his Government would never do this because they knew they had only to wait until the Russian army threatened the Dardanelles for Britain to come to their aid, for "England must come to the rescue of her own interests which were also those of the Sultan."<sup>6</sup> Lord Odo Russell was hinting that Turkey's attitude was influenced by a belief in the ultimate intervention of Great Britain, and there is nothing in his correspondence to indicate that he shared the hysterical fear of Russia that obsessed the Crown Princess at this

<sup>1</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 201.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 456. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 14 December 1877.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. II. 161.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 457. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 14 December 1877.

<sup>5</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli*, VI. 204-5.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 466. To Lord Derby. Secret. 18 December 1877.



time,<sup>1</sup> but his chief concern lay, not with Russia, but with the policy of Germany, which he outlined as modified by the new situation.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 22 December 1877.<sup>2</sup>—

“... The policy of Germany in regard to the Turco-Russian war, had entered into a phase of unconditional neutrality. It is in the name of neutrality that the Emperor declines to entertain the Sultan's request for mediation, and it is to avoid committing himself to any opinion on it that Prince Bismarck prolongs his absence from Berlin.

Herr von Bülow . . . declares that the German Government are determined to adhere to the principle of neutrality and to take no initiative in the matter. They are content . . . to leave the belligerents to negotiate separately, or the Powers to mediate between them according to circumstances, and according to the interests of the Powers more directly concerned in Eastern affairs. The only interest Germany has in the settlement of the question is the establishment of a sound and lasting peace, and to that much desired effect and end Germany will give her full and cordial support as soon as the Powers are agreed among each other. So far the attitude of Germany is clear and precise.

From the reports of H.M.'s Ambassador at Constantinople we gather that Prince Reuss urges the Porte to address itself directly to Russia and make peace at once, and Mr. Layard's information is confirmed here by the Turkish Ambassador who says he knows the German Government to be in favour of direct and separate peace negotiations between Turkey and Russia. Well-informed persons here say the Austrian Government agree with that of Germany in preferring the preliminaries of peace to be negotiated by the belligerents alone without the interference of the other Powers.

There is, however, no danger of Turkey following the advice of Prince Reuss or Count Zichy. I am assured by my Turkish colleague, Sadoullah Bey, since the Sultan knows he can reckon on the protection of England when Russia threatens Constantinople, His Majesty will always prefer to be under the protectorate of Great Britain to being at the mercy of Russia.

The speeches of Count Andrassy to the delegations at Vienna and the attitude of the Austrian Government generally have

<sup>1</sup>Ponsonby: *Letters of the Empress Frederick* 155-7.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 478.

given great satisfaction at Berlin. There is reason to believe that the understanding between the two Governments is as cordial and intimate as heretofore, and that both Austria and Germany are agreed that their neutrality shall continue to be more benevolent towards Russia than towards Turkey and the more so if the tripartite Northern alliance should be put to the test by coming events. . . ."

Sadoullah Bey had not misinformed Lord Odo Russell when he declared that his Government would not follow Bismarck's advice to appeal direct to Russia. Within a few days the Porte applied for the good offices of Great Britain. Lord Beaconsfield described this as the second act of the drama, of which the calling of Parliament was the first, but the news was badly received in Berlin. Lord Odo Russell learned that Bismarck and Andrassy would put every possible obstacle in the way of mediation so that Turkey would be compelled to appeal direct to Russia,<sup>1</sup> but Bülow was careful not to commit himself too far officially to the Ambassador, and even called it "good and important news," and repeated that Bismarck desired to see England and Russia acting together in Eastern affairs.<sup>2</sup> But the next day Lord Odo Russell heard that he and Andrassy had been in telegraphic communication with Gorchakov, and were in agreement with him that Russia should reply that while the Emperor was willing to make peace, Turkey must propose direct negotiations.<sup>3</sup>

One event of the closing day of 1877 afforded Bismarck supreme satisfaction, and considerably simplified his difficulties—this was the long-desired recall of Gontaut-Biron. He left Berlin on 30 December, leaving behind him the sincere regrets of all his diplomatic colleagues, who had watched the growing delicacy of his position in Berlin with increasing sympathy. Bismarck alone wished him to be replaced by an ambassador "less wedded to the cause of legitimacy and of the Church of Rome."<sup>4</sup> Such an ambassador was necessary if his policy towards France in the coming year was to bear good fruit. He regarded a

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 481. To Lord Derby. Secret. 26 December 1877.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 488. Confidential. 28 December 1877.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 881. No. 495. To Lord Derby. Secret. 29 December 1877.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 475. Most Confidential. 22 December 1877.

change of ambassador as an augury for the stability of the republic.

And so 1877 drew to a close, the situation in the East was no less fraught with perplexity than it had been at the beginning of the year.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE PEACE BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY

[1878]

*On hasarde de perdre en voulant trop gagner.*—LA FONTAINE.

*Indecision and Obscurity.*—Lord Odo Russell and the “conditional neutrality” of Great Britain—the Queen’s fury at Russia’s attitude—Bismarck’s regret at last Russian victories—the peace terms—Bismarck’s views—Austria’s proposal of a conference—uncertainty as to Russia’s designs—Bismarck’s declaration of policy to Lord Odo Russell—his suspicion that England would go to war—further confidences of Bismarck—Lord Odo Russell’s conviction that he had given up all hope of maintaining Turkey in Europe—fears that he meant to support Russia.

*Lord Odo Russell and Bismarck’s obscure policy.*—Bismarck’s equivocal attitude—alarm of French Ambassador with regard to Bismarck’s hints about Egypt—his conversations with Russell—the proposed conference—suggestion that it should be held in Berlin—Russell’s gloomy view—Lord Beaconsfield’s demands—Lord Lyons appointed British plenipotentiary—his appeal to Russell for help—Russell’s reply—refusal of Russia to accept British demands—fears of war—Bismarck’s optimism—Derby’s resignation.

*The changed Situation.*—Lord Salisbury’s circular—its great effect on Bismarck—close collaboration between Salisbury and Russell—diplomatic invitation to Bismarck to mediate—happy results of Lord Odo’s diplomacy—his summary of Bismarck’s policy as modified by recent events—slow progress of mediation—Shuvalov’s visit to Berlin—German reserve—Russian acceptance of British demands—the conference to meet—plenipotentiaries, Beaconsfield, Salisbury and Russell—Russell’s instructions—arrival of British Ministers in Berlin.

#### I

THE pressing problem at the beginning of 1878 was the question of mediation. Lord Odo Russell’s first despatch was a repetition of his previous warning that Gorchakov, acting

on the advice both of Bismarck and Andrassy, would insist on direct negotiations, but that England would be invited to make a more explicit statement with regard to the interests she wished Russia to respect. He had heard that the three Northern Courts had agreed that the peace conditions should contain as little provocation to France, Italy or England as possible.<sup>1</sup>

In accordance with this advice Russia rejected the proffered overture. Lord Carnarvon's speech, in which he refused to take umbrage at this attitude, infuriated the Queen and Lord Beaconsfield, but in Berlin it created a very different impression. Bülow told Lord Odo Russell that it was a good omen for peace, and showed that "the Government were animated by a conciliatory spirit, well calculated to bring about a satisfactory agreement between England and Russia." Such an agreement would give the greatest satisfaction to Germany. "The influence of the German Government," drily replied the Ambassador, "could be beneficially exercised in bringing about the agreement they desired—for it should not be forgotten that England had interests in Turkey which H.M.G. would know how to protect in all circumstances."<sup>2</sup>

While the British Cabinet was meeting almost every day mysterious letters were passing between the three Emperors. In Berlin, as in London, there were apprehensions that the general peace was in danger and the atmosphere grew ever more tense. The Emperor William sent a close confidant, Count Lehndorf, to Varzin, that he might report Bismarck's views on this correspondence, and Lord Odo Russell made strenuous efforts to find out what answer he had brought. So far as he could judge from his information Bismarck was satisfied with the course of events, and even approved of England's overtures to Russia, but if they did not lead to an understanding and war followed, Germany would remain strictly neutral. He hoped the question would be settled once for all and not be postponed by means of compromises.<sup>3</sup>

Everybody was asking Lord Odo what H.M.G. really intended to do, and he found a general impression that the "conditional neutrality" of Great Britain was being misunderstood.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 901. No. 2. To Lord Derby. Secret. 3 January 1878.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 7. Confidential. 5 January 1878.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 901. No. 8. To Lord Derby. Secret. 5 January 1878.

*To Lord Derby.* 10 January 1878.<sup>1</sup>—

“... Under these circumstances I think it necessary to repeat over and over again in conversation with those who ask me, that H.M.G. animated by the desire to avoid a general conflagration, have adopted while the war lasts, a policy of conditional neutrality which they will carry out impartially as long as Turkish interests alone are involved, but should at any moment British interests be imperilled by the operations of war or the pretensions of the victor, then H.M.G. would be equally bound and determined to protect, defend and secure those interests by all the means in their power. . . .”

The events of the second week of January, which made the Queen almost frantic, caused Bismarck also to regard the situation with much less equanimity. Outwardly he pretended to believe that the armistice question was on the point of being settled, but Lord Odo Russell learned that privately he was far from easy. He admitted that the two latest Russian successes at Sophia and Shipka would make her “bumptious and overbearing and he therefore would be no longer sorry if some complications arose after all which would compel England to fight the Russians and check their aggressive pride.” An English victory, re-establishing the balance of power would be a good thing. “England would then again hold a commanding position, and allied with Germany would dictate peace and order to Europe by sea and land for years to come.” While not vouching for the accuracy of this statement, Lord Odo Russell remarked that it was entirely consistent with sentiments expressed to him on more than one occasion.<sup>2</sup>

Parliament met on 17 January. By this time Russia and Turkey were in communication, and Lord Beaconsfield was considering a defensive alliance with Austria, offering her “if necessary, a pecuniary aid, provided she would mobilize a sufficient force upon her frontier and join us in an identic note to Russia.”<sup>3</sup> But Austria had thought of another solution. She had already been informed of the peace terms and found them unacceptable. Two alternatives were before her—war, or a conference—and

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 901. No. 17.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 901. No. 22. To Lord Derby. Secret. 12 January 1878.

<sup>3</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 227.

Andrassy came out in favour of the latter.<sup>1</sup> Lord Odo Russell heard of much of what was going on "from a confidential informant," but he was led to believe that Gorchakov had expressed a wish for a European conference and that Andrassy and Bismarck were prepared to agree.<sup>2</sup> This news he imparted to Lord Derby, to whom, in consequence, Austria's "indecisive reply"<sup>3</sup> probably did not come as a surprise.

On 24 January the peace terms were made public. Bülow told Lord Odo Russell that at first sight they appeared moderate, and that in any case Germany would maintain her attitude of strict neutrality, but Lord Odo warned him "that moderate as the conditions . . . appeared at first sight, the protection of British interests in the East might yet at any moment necessitate a policy of action."<sup>4</sup> Lord Odo Russell had consistently warned his Government that Bismarck, Andrassy and Gorchakov were in communication, but Mr. Layard from the vantage ground of Constantinople did not think the situation quite so simple as that. He was convinced that Prince Reuss inspired by Bismarck was acting so as to exclude England from all share in the settlement of the Eastern Question. But Lord Odo Russell would never agree that this was so—he maintained on the contrary that it was Bismarck's earnest wish that England should take her proper place, and that he was now favourable to the idea of a conference.<sup>5</sup> The signing of the armistice on 1 February gave Austria the opportunity of issuing a formal invitation to the other Powers to take part in a conference to be held in Vienna for the settlement of the Eastern Question.

In England the armistice brought no relief to the tense state of public opinion; there was chaos in the Cabinet, and alarmist reports continued to flow in from Layard at Constantinople. In Berlin Lord Odo Russell saw nothing to make him alter his opinion that Bismarck sincerely desired an agreement between England and Russia as without it he saw no chance of a durable peace which should enable Germany to recover from the commercial depression which threatened her.<sup>6</sup> Russia's behaviour

<sup>1</sup>G.P. II. p.170.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 901. No. 42. To Lord Derby. Secret. 20 January 1878.

<sup>3</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 227.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 901. No. 52. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 25 January 1878.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 902. No. 71. Secret. 1 February 1878.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 64. 902. No. 91. To Lord Derby. Most confidential. 9 February 1878.

meanwhile did little to alter Bismarck's opinion that her last victories had been harmful. She was making great difficulties about the place where the conference was to meet, and her activities in the East were exasperating Great Britain to the last degree. Parliament voted a credit of £6,000,000 and Lord Odo Russell heard from a secret source that the Chancellor was privately urging Andrassy to oppose Russia if he felt secure he would be backed up by England. He calculated that although Russia might feel strong enough to engage Austria alone, she would probably be brought to her senses if faced with the prospect of an Anglo-Austrian combination.<sup>1</sup> So uncertain was the situation that Bismarck showed signs of unwillingness to commit himself in the Reichstag on his return to Berlin but took an early opportunity of explaining his attitude to the British Ambassador, only stipulating that what he said should not appear in a Blue Book. He assured him that Germany would remain neutral in the event of a war, that the whole German nation "wished for the friendship of England and as long as he lived he would promise that Germany would never support any other Power against England. On the other hand it could not be the interest of Germany to take part in a conflict about Eastern affairs," and therefore Germany must remain neutral. His attitude must be kept secret lest the other Powers should take advantage of it. He then referred with bitterness to the fact that the three Emperors so often corresponded with each other behind the backs of their ministers, and kept their communications secret because they freely criticized them in their letters to each other.

Bismarck believed that Russia was actuated by a conviction that she was strong enough to fight England and that war would be popular in Russia. As regarded Austria, Andrassy was sincerely desirous of working with England, but he could not rely upon the support of the Emperor. Much would depend upon England's conditions, but it was true that at the moment Russia was better prepared for war than Austria and its first fruits would be the loss of Galicia and even, if Italy behaved badly, of the Trentino, "which he would regret." Lord Odo asked if he "would not do more than regret, and whether it would not be in the interests of Germany to object and interfere." Bismarck

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 92. Secret. 12 February 1878.



replied that Germany's neutrality would depend upon Russia's attitude. "Germany would never tolerate the presence of a Russian army at Brünn for any length of time, but happily such a contingency was not likely to arise," but on the whole he did not see what would be gained by a war as Russia had practically ended the independence of the Sultan in Europe. Lord Odo Russell thought this was going too far and regretted that Bismarck's neutrality was more "benevolent" to Russia than to Austria, but Bismarck declared on the contrary that he had made a sacred promise to Andrassy at Gastein "to befriend him to the end, and the German people were pro-Austrian, but Russia was a safe and old ally, while the Austrian alliance depended almost entirely on one man, whose position was not so strong as it had been in the past. Andrassy himself might have played his cards better by occupying Serbia in the name of peace when she declared war on Turkey a second time. Russia could not have objected, and "Austria would have been in a strong position. As Austria had sixteen millions<sup>1</sup> of Serbian subjects and no Bulgarians it would have been wise to neutralize Serbia and leave Bulgaria to be dealt with by the conference," to the early meeting of which Bismarck attached great importance.<sup>2</sup>

Fearing from this conversation that though Lord Odo himself was in favour of peace, he was convinced that war was imminent, Bismarck warned Oubril that the Ambassador had asked him what Germany's attitude would be, and then wrote to von Schweinitz, telling him what he had done. Both England and Austria felt that the conference must meet soon if war was to be averted. "Prince Gorchakov knows what he is doing and does not need our advice, but you will tell him the above facts confidentially."<sup>3</sup>

Lord Derby found Bismarck's pronouncement vague in the extreme. He asked Lord Odo to find out more precisely his intentions and policy, and on February 25 Bismarck invited him to dinner and they talked over the situation.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 25 February 1878.<sup>4</sup>—

"... Regarding Russia, Prince Bismarck said that the fortunes of

<sup>1</sup>*Sic.* but an absurd estimate.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 902. No. 119. To Lord Derby. Secret. 17 February 1878.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. II. p.194.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 902. No. 142.

war and neutrality of Europe had enabled her to take possession of Turkey, and the reluctance of Europe to contest her conquest by force of arms would enable Russia to remain in possession for the time being.

The weakness of the Tsar, and the age of Prince Gorchakov had enabled General Ignatyev (of whom he spoke in terms of hatred and contempt) to take the negotiations with Turkey out of the hands of the Government at St. Petersburg into his own hands at Adrianople.

Elated by their success the Muscovite and military party who backed up General Ignatyev's policy thought themselves strong enough if necessary to risk a further conflict with England and Austria, and it was probably under the influence of that party that Prince Gorchakov sought by various subterfuges to postpone the meeting of the conference, with a secret hope of backing out of it altogether.

But neither the Tsar nor Prince Gorchakov could for the present exercise any control over General Ignatyev, the Grand Duke Nicholas and the war party at Adrianople, who did what they pleased.

The friendly instruction he, Prince Bismarck, had sent to General von Schweinitz to urge upon the Russian Government the wisdom of moderation and the necessity of an early meeting of the conference had met, to his surprise and displeasure, with an evasive, not to say an impertinent answer on the part of his old friend Gorchakov, which was a clear proof that the influence of the war party was increasing at St. Petersburg and that the possibility of dispensing with the conference was in contemplation.

Regarding Austria, Prince Bismarck said that he did not think Count Andrassy could count on the support of his imperial master if he proposed to add war to the difficulties Austria already had to contend with.

The Hungarian element in the empire might urge Count Andrassy, the Magyar, into action, but the Slav element would restrain the Emperor from interfering with their national aspirations or, in other words, the Emperor of Austria could not allow the King of Hungary and the King of Croatia to go to war with each other without danger to the empire. Besides which, other influences were at work. The Arch-Duke Albrecht and the Slav leaders, the German subjects and advisers of H.M. and the private letters from the imperial allies would combine to recommend a compromise in preference to a rupture to the Emperor's mind, who would gradually be persuaded that an

increase of territory was a safer solution than a war, for which Austria is not well prepared.

Regarding France, Prince Bismarck said he was under an impression that the French Government were less interested than England in the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, and above all bent on avoiding a quarrel with Russia, to whom they seemed always ready to make concessions with a view to securing a continuance of the friendly relations already existing between them. The same, though in a lesser degree, might be said, he thought, of Italy, who seemed anxious to establish more intimate relations with Russia than with Austria.

He most sincerely and earnestly hoped that notwithstanding his misgivings the conference would meet, and that an agreement among the Powers might be achieved. If it did not, he assumed that England would feel bound by the decree of 6 May to go to war to wrench Constantinople and the Straits from the grasp of Russia. England had it in her power to do so and inflict heavy blows and great humiliation on Russia. If England could persuade Austria to fight with her, which he doubted, and if Austria could bring half a million men into the field, Russia might in due course be driven from her present position. But when England and Austria had successfully occupied the positions now held by Russia, the independence of the Sultan would not for that be re-established, and a redistribution of power in the East would still remain inevitable. He did not for his part look upon the possession of Constantinople and the Straits as a question of European importance, because the maritime states had it always in their power to shut out the ships of the government in possession of them, and that power was worth more than a treaty in his opinion.

The possession of Egypt and the free passage to India was a question of European interest and he deeply regretted that his wish to see England secure to herself and guarantee to others the road to her Eastern Empire through the Canal had been so strangely and so unjustly misrepresented in England. For his part, he should like to see England, whilst protesting against Russian aggression and before actually plunging into war, occupy Egypt and the islands as a pledge and there concentrate her forces while Austria, acting in concert, would simultaneously occupy Bosnia, Herzegovina and even Serbia, and in all probability the effects of these measures would render war unnecessary and the Eastern Question would cease to threaten the peace of Europe. . . .”

From this and Bismarck's previous conversations Lord Odo Russell concluded that Bismarck had given up all hope of maintaining any part of Turkey's government in Europe. He meant to support Russia and would not oppose a Russian occupation of Constantinople, hoping to induce Austria to make terms with Russia at the territorial expense of Turkey. He did not anticipate difficulty either with France or Italy, and although he favoured a peaceable partition he would not hesitate to take advantage of war between Russia and England to do what he pleased. It is evident that at this moment Lord Odo Russell was not favourably impressed with Bismarck's tactics.

## II

The events of the next few days confirmed the British Ambassador in his opinion that Bismarck meant to support Russia. He heard that he was doing all he could to persuade France and Italy to allow her to keep her gains,<sup>1</sup> and his efforts may have contributed to the failure of a plan of Lord Beaconsfield's to form a Mediterranean League to thwart Russia.<sup>2</sup> Bismarck himself confided to the new French Ambassador, Count de St. Vallier, that Gorchakov was more than making up for his diplomatic errors at the beginning and that acting under his advice he had compromised with Austria, who was now going to take a pledge in the shape of Bosnia and Herzegovina instead of fighting. England was playing a losing game, for a conqueror never forgave those who came between him and his spoils; let her take Egypt for a pledge and then the conference could begin.<sup>3</sup> Despite much weighty evidence that Bismarck really desired peace for the sake of Germany, as Lord Odo Russell was never tired of reiterating, it is hard to avoid the impression that he was stirring up national animosities in thus lightly suggesting to France that England should take Egypt, and to Lord Odo himself that Gorchakov was contemplating dispensing with the conference. In any case he succeeded in thoroughly alarming St. Vallier, who hurried off to sound his British colleague. He

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 902. No. 146. To Lord Derby. 26 February 1878.

<sup>2</sup>For Italy's final refusal see *Crispi* II. 96-7.

<sup>3</sup>*D.D.F.* II. 261-263.

carefully avoided mentioning Bismarck's name, but led the conversation round to Egypt by casually alluding to Leon Say and Mr. Waddington's visit to England, and observing that "nothing could be more fatal to friendly relations between England and France than any attempt of England to take possession of Egypt." Lord Odo Russell set his mind at rest. So far as he was aware, H.M.G. had no such plan.

That very evening Russell had a conversation with Bismarck that gave him food for thought. It seemed to him more than a mere coincidence that Bismarck should recur to the subject of Egypt. Münster, he reported, said that the Government and the Opposition were entirely opposed to the annexation of Egypt and in these circumstances he would like to know whether such an annexation by France would be objected to.

Lord Odo replied: "H.M.G. were satisfied with the *status quo* in regard to Egypt, but that any attempt on the part of France to meddle with it would be met by force, and that England would go to war rather than tolerate a foreign protectorate." Saying he was glad to hear it Bismarck changed the subject.<sup>1</sup>

While the Chancellor was trying to plumb the depths of English and French policy an exchange of opinion was going on among the Powers as to the place of the conference. At a concert given in honour of the Crown Prince of Austria on 4 March, Lord Odo Russell heard rumours that the Austrian Government had suggested Berlin as the place of meeting. He was dismayed. A conference held in Berlin, he thought, would be as much under Russian influence as in St. Petersburg, and in his own mind he was convinced that the proposal did not emanate from Vienna.<sup>2</sup> But his suspicions were confirmed. Bülow told him that both Andrassy and Gorchakov wished to attend in person, and as Bismarck would not go either to Vienna or Baden, they wished the conference to be transferred to Berlin. This meant that Lord Odo Russell would probably have much more to do with the conference than he had anticipated, but for the present he was fully occupied with the day-to-day difficulties of his unenviable position. The cabinet dissensions

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 151. To Lord Derby. Secret. 2 March 1878.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 164. To Lord Derby. Secret. 5 March 1878.

in London prevented him from receiving adequate instructions, and he was left for the moment with the unpleasant task of representing a policy the details of which he was profoundly ignorant. Bismarck's acceptance of the presidency he regarded as a good omen that his influence would be exerted in favour of peace, but he took gloomy views when the thought of British interests came before his mind. "His personal sympathies are chiefly engaged in the cause of Russia, and of the Christian population of Turkey. He has no sympathy for the Turks and thinks their rule in Europe should be allowed to die out without further bloodshed. He does not object to the independence of Roumania and Serbia, and wishes Greece to extend her dominions over the neighbouring Greek provinces. He thinks that Austria, instead of making the proposed extension of the new principality of Bulgaria a *casus belli* would do better to take possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He wishes England to obtain full satisfaction in regard to her interests and lasting guarantees in regard to the safety and freedom of her communications with India."<sup>1</sup> But at the moment it looked doubtful whether the conference would meet at all. England seemed more ready to fight Russia than to negotiate with her, and Bismarck informed Lord Odo Russell that he would in no case take part in a congress unless England were represented. On the actual point at issue between the two countries he refused to make any statement.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Beaconsfield had demanded that the whole treaty should be laid before the congress. While Lord Odo Russell heard privately that Bismarck considered the British demand exaggerated, to the Ambassador's face he held very different language. He said he was quite willing to accept the British demand "if the other Powers agreed, but he did not think it likely that Russia would. The French proposal to limit the discussion to questions only which arose directly or naturally out of the war he was equally willing to agree to, but he thought it might be found inconvenient to some Powers. For instance, if England had something to say about Egypt, France might object. He was glad to see by the newspapers that H.M.G. were inclined to favour Greece in the coming congress, and he would willingly support

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 181. To Lord Derby. Secret. 9 March 1878.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 192. 11 March 1878.

England and Austria in promoting the interests of the Greek nation, but he would not for that be inclined to admit a Greek plenipotentiary into the conference, which should in his opinion be composed of signatory Powers only. Russia having taken Bulgaria under her wing it would in his opinion be good policy on the part of England and Austria to promote the interests of the Greeks and the Serbians, and if such a policy were adopted, he would gladly give it his best support."<sup>1</sup>

Supposing the British demands were accepted and the congress met, the difficult question would arise of choosing a plenipotentiary. Lord Derby's objection to leaving England was well known and in any case he could hardly have represented Great Britain at this time. For the moment there was no question of either Lord Salisbury or Lord Beaconsfield's being spared, and the choice of the Government fell on Lord Lyons. He did not anticipate his task with any degree of enthusiasm and wrote to his old friend, Lord Odo Russell, for help. But with all the goodwill in the world his friend had little to offer. He said how glad he would be to give him hints if only he knew what British policy was likely to be at the congress: he reviewed the situation carefully as it appeared to him at the moment, but declared himself absolutely in the dark as to whether the Government accepted the consequences of their neutrality or contested them.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Derby then notified him that he was to be associated with Lord Lyons and with great diffidence he replied that he would naturally afford Lord Lyons every assistance in his power, but begged the Government to consider that he was very "superficially acquainted with Eastern affairs," and he feared he could not give Lord Lyons "that experienced and efficient assistance which his colleagues will derive from such men as Prince Lobanov, Baron Calice and Dr. Busch who are to act as second plenipotentiaries."<sup>3</sup> But in spite of his protest he was appointed, and now he felt he must acquaint the Government with his views on British policy.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 204. To Lord Derby. Secret. 13 March 1878. An extract from this despatch was slightly altered in form at Bismarck's request before being published in a Blue Book.

<sup>2</sup>Newton: *Lord Lyons*. II. 130.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 207. To Lord Derby. Private. 15 March 1878.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 17 March 1878.<sup>1</sup>—

“... Setting aside all illusions in the matter, it must be admitted first that Russia is in possession of Turkey, and second that the treaties of 1856 and 1871 have been practically superseded by the Turco-Russian treaty of San Stephano. That treaty will be recommended to the acceptance of Europe by Russia, and will form the real basis of discussion in the coming conference. Germany, as well already known, will give it her cordial support, the Emperor and Prince Bismarck look upon the treaty of San Stephano as an accomplished fact, and consider the congress as the means to obtain its recognition by the signatory Powers of the treaties it is to supersede. Russia and Germany will, therefore, act in concert as allies and relations in the congress.

The next question to consider is whether France is at present in a position to take an impartial view of the treaty in question. France has long wished to be allied with Russia and relieved of the threat of another war with Germany. The congress will offer France another opportunity of securing the good-will of both Russia and Germany by a friendly support of their united wishes. There are no French interests involved in the treaty of San Stephano likely to necessitate a quarrel with Russia, but many reasons to avoid one in the general interests of France. Since Mr. Waddington's accession to office and Count de St. Vallier's appointment to Berlin, great efforts have been made to improve the relations of France and Germany, and the sudden and unexpected permission granted to German artists to participate in the Paris exhibition is a signal proof of the success of the overtures already made by the new French Government. Before adhering to the proposed conference France has already made certain conditions with Russia and Germany. She has asked that Egypt, Syria and the Holy Places etc. should not be alluded to, and may well hold out some prospect of support in return for the favour asked. We may fairly therefore assume that France is not in a position to take an entirely impartial view of Eastern affairs, and that she will think to serve her own interests best by placing her voice at the disposal of Russia and Germany in the congress.

Italy might give an independent vote, if she attached less importance to the good-will of Russia and Germany she has laboured long to acquire. In any case Prince Gorchakov and Prince Bismarck will not find it difficult to keep Italy from taking

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 213.



sides with Austria, if Austria should persist in taking a line of her own in opposition to Russia and Germany. No doubt the new ministry in Italy may adopt a new policy, but the chances are that Italy will think it more for her future interests to support Russia, Germany and France united than Austria at the congress.

Austria, on the other hand, has already declared her intention to resist the pretensions of Russia and will, no doubt, object to the proposed limits of the new principality of Bulgaria and to the prolonged occupation of Turkish territory by Russian troops. If Russia by Germany's friendly advice consents to a smaller Bulgaria and a shorter occupation, Austria will make the most of the victory obtained, and in return will agree to the rest of the treaty of San Stephano. But if Russia refuses, Austria must choose between accepting a diplomatic defeat or going to war to turn Russia out of Bulgaria. To prevent war between her allies and to keep the Northern Alliance together, Prince Bismarck will exert his personal influence to bring about a compromise, and will urge the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria. Whether Austria will accept the compromise or go to war must depend very much on the attitude of England, but the chances are in favour of the compromise because Count Andrassy's war policy has not the support of the Emperor, or of His Majesty's non-Hungarian subjects. Austria is poor, weak and dependent upon her neighbours and public opinion is growing more favourable to peace and provinces than to war and its risks and consequences. Russia and Germany have it in their power to neutralize the opposition of Austria if they choose, and it is more than probable that they will exercise that power when the conference meets.

Taking it all in all therefore, the relative position of the Powers does not seem to warrant much independence of discussion in the coming congress, and the treaty of San Stephano with some modifications has a fair chance of superseding the treaties of 1856 and 1871 unless, of course, England adopts a policy calculated to command the support of Austria, Germany, France and Italy, or declines to attend the congress, when the Eastern Question will remain open to discussion and some future settlement. . . ."

It seemed evident to Lord Odo Russell that little short of a miracle could avert the coming triumph of Russia, but the next few days were to see him more despairing still. His warnings that the three Northern Powers were acting together fell on deaf

ears. Lord Beaconsfield heard the contrary from Austria,<sup>1</sup> but Russell was firm in his conviction that Andrassy would accept the treaty if his allies would help him in the difficult internal position in which he found himself.

*To Lord Derby.* Secret. 19 March 1878.<sup>2</sup>—

“... Count Andrassy wishes to bring about a pacific settlement, and declares himself ready to accept the treaty of San Stephano and asks his allies in return to help him to extricate himself out of the false position he is in between his Hungarian supporters, who are ready for a conflict with Russia, and the Emperor Francis Joseph, who, with his Slav and German subjects, wishes to avoid that conflict, and would prefer a compromise and the annexation of Bosnia to war with Russia.

Count Andrassy is of opinion that his friends should allow him to obtain through the congress such concessions respecting the size of Bulgaria and the early withdrawal of the Russian troops of occupation as could be proclaimed in Hungary to be a triumph of his policy and thereby enable him to pacify his Hungarian supporters and give his assent to the rest of the treaty of San Stephano. . . .”

Important though the attitude of Austria was, Russia's intentions were much more vital to the peace of Europe, and she created a new situation by refusing the British demand to submit the whole treaty to the congress. The measures that Lord Beaconsfield felt called upon to take brought about the final resignation of Lord Derby and a new era in British foreign policy immediately began. Before this result came about Lord Odo Russell had to endure a very uncomfortable week in Berlin. The French Ambassador noticed how grieved he was and reported that there was a marked coldness towards his British colleagues. Lord Odo himself, in deep dejection, informed his Government that the irritation against England was such that she was held responsible for the rejection of the congress, and an Anglo-Russian war was considered inevitable. The Emperor, ill with worry, was only restrained by Bismarck from coming out openly on the side of his nephew.

<sup>1</sup>“Austria is on her knees to us to agree to Berlin, giving the most solemn assurances that she has no secret treaty or understanding with Russia; that Germany will support her, and that with the aid of Great Britain, Russia may be seriously checked. . . .” Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 256.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 217.

Bismarck, the realist, refused to believe in war. There was no *casus belli* in the treaty. The terms, which had just been published, would have to be modified, but the interests of both countries demanded a peaceful solution, similar to that being negotiated at the moment between Austria and Russia by General Ignatyev.<sup>1</sup> He did not regret the congress because in their present temper there was little likelihood of agreement, but later on, after Austria and Russia had agreed on certain modifications, English public opinion would, he thought, become more favourable to the pacific settlement of a European congress.<sup>2</sup> At this juncture Lord Derby resigned and Salisbury became Foreign Secretary.

## III

Lord Salisbury acted at once. His famous circular cut the Gordian Knot of uncertainty and clarified the whole situation. To nobody was the change more welcome than to Lord Odo Russell. From the very beginning he was able to serve his chief as he would only too gladly have served Lord Derby, and Lord Salisbury immediately got into confidential communication with him. While he wanted to know Bismarck's views in detail, he saw that the Ambassador was no longer left in the dark as to the policy his Government wished him to advocate. The reign of chaos was over and that of order had begun. In his very first despatch he pointed out that Russian domination however disguised was to be opposed on any coast wherever England had "friends, clients or interests." The only question was "diminution or counterpoise."<sup>3</sup>

Bismarck, outwardly reserved, was secretly impressed. About the time of Lord Derby's resignation his banker, Bleichröder, was consulting him about considerable loans required by Austria. Bismarck advised the utmost caution, saying the political outlook was very bad. A few days later the Prince sent for him and told him he was negotiating, though he could not say yet if his

<sup>1</sup>Since Russia was negotiating direct with Austria over certain parts of the treaty, Lord B.'s delight at "direct negotiations with England" seem rather naïve. Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 260.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 903. No. 238. To Lord Derby. Confidential. 30 March 1878.

<sup>3</sup>Cecil: *Salisbury* II. 239.

efforts would be successful.<sup>1</sup> The Crown Princess was beside herself for joy, and the whole atmosphere in Berlin was more hopeful than it had been for months.

The publication of Lord Salisbury's circular was wise, but perhaps even wiser was his determination to use Lord Odo Russell's unique diplomatic gifts to induce Bismarck to show his hand, and to test his repeated assurances that he would support England in any attempt at a pacific solution of the quarrel. Münster had warned him that peace was endangered by the proximity of the English fleet and the Russian army. Lord Salisbury thought that Bismarck might take a friendly hint that his mediation would be welcomed. Trusting entirely to Lord Odo's tact and judgment, this delicate negotiation was to be left absolutely to his discretion.<sup>2</sup> Like his chief he wasted no time. He threw out the suggestion as if it came from himself. Surely diplomacy was seldom put to better use than on this spring day when he told Bismarck that if he cared to appropriate the idea, he "would endeavour to make it acceptable" to Lord Salisbury, but if not that it might just sink into oblivion. Bismarck's reception of the hint proved his real sincerity. He seemed gratified and promised to sound Prince Gorchakov on the matter,<sup>3</sup> following this up by an appeal that Lord Salisbury would trust him and believe in his earnest desire for peace.

Lord Salisbury's mistrust of Bismarck the previous year had been profound, but Lord Odo Russell succeeded in convincing him of the necessity of good relations between England and Germany and Lord Salisbury, pleased with the results of his first efforts, confided the secrets of his diplomacy to Lord Odo Russell so that he might be on firm ground in his negotiations with the Chancellor. It was in short a minor diplomatic revolution. Lord Beaconsfield's policy had been to put spokes in the wheel of the three Emperors' understanding—Lord Salisbury and Lord Odo Russell realized the necessity of giving Germany something definite to support. Within a fortnight Bismarck knew that "an independent Bulgaria should not reach south of the Balkans, that either Russia should surrender her Asiatic conquests or that England should acquire 'some posts which would

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 904. No. 269. Mr. Dering to Lord Odo Russell. Secret. 15 April 1878.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. 612-3.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* 614.

safeguard her Asiatic interests' that the Straits should either be neutralized and their fortifications forbidden or that the blockade of them should be recognized as legitimate in time of war."<sup>1</sup>

As this policy was unfolded to him there was now a clear-cut plan to discuss, and although Russell did not think Bismarck would be inclined to favour the substitution of a Greek province for the southern half of the new Bulgaria, he had expressed his willingness "to support any terms of settlement which England might think necessary for her own security—provided they were acceptable to Russia." In view of the delicate position he could hardly go further than this at the moment.

In trying to negotiate the mutual withdrawal of Russia and England from the neighbourhood of Constantinople, Bismarck had undertaken no light task. He found both Governments timid of offending public opinion by any appearance of compromise, and felt constrained to confide in Lord Odo Russell that he hoped the whole world would not be risked for mere points of detail.<sup>2</sup> But so complicated did these points become that the whole month was taken up with the attempted mediation. Meanwhile, in accordance with his policy of keeping Lord Odo Russell well informed, Lord Salisbury sent him the correspondence he had been exchanging with Austria, to which Lord Odo replied:

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 22 April 1878.<sup>3</sup>—

"... As far as I can judge Prince Bismarck will support these joint interests of England and Austria, in the coming congress, although I suspect him of having more sympathy for what he calls 'Russian Bulgaria' than he admits at present. He would not, however, go the length of risking a quarrel with Russia, whose alliance he thinks essential to the safety and peace of Germany, and to which he attaches more importance than to an alliance with Austria. His chief efforts I think will be directed towards the maintenance of peace between Austria and Russia and a continuance of the Northern Alliance which he will endeavour to achieve by promoting a policy of compromise of

<sup>1</sup>Cecil: *Salisbury* II. 242.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 904. No. 268. To Lord Salisbury. Most Confidential. 14 April 1878.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 904. No. 282.

mutual concessions between his two allies. From the beginning of the contest Prince Bismarck has been more favourable to the partition of the Turkish Empire in Europe than to what Prince Gorchakov used to call a 'replastering of the edifice' at the time of the Berlin Memorandum.

It is believed in Berlin that Count Andrassy has come round to Prince Bismarck's views and that he intends to safeguard the interests of Austria by annexing Bosnia, Herzegovina and a part of Albania to the Austrian Empire. This impression is borne out by the fact that Count Andrassy has already sounded the Turkish Government as to their willingness to cede these provinces to Austria. The passages in Count Andrassy's despatch . . . where he dilates on the advantages of a 'rational curtailment of Turkish property' and reserves to himself to treat the question of Bosnia, Herzegovina and the sea coast in the vicinity of Montenegro in a special despatch would appear to be preparatory to a confession of his intentions.

If this should prove to be the case, Count Andrassy will no longer be in a position to insist on so complete a limitation of the proposed frontier of Bulgaria as might be desirable in the general interest of Europe. His telegram to Count Beust of the 18th inst. indicates a disposition to allow Bulgaria to extend beyond the line of the Balkans—a disposition which Prince Gorchakov will probably not discourage.

In regard to the creation of a Greek province of Turkey out of what is now proposed to be the southern half of new Bulgaria, I am under an impression that Prince Bismarck will support any agreement come to between England and Austria. Personally he thinks that a Greek province under Turkish rule will always be exposed to Russian influences whilst an enlarged and strengthened kingdom of Greece would in his opinion become the natural enemy and opponent of pan-Slavism in the East. It is, therefore, not impossible that he may put in a word for the annexation of Thessaly and Epirus to the kingdom of Greece in the coming congress.

Prince Bismarck fully shares Count Andrassy's opinion that it is unnecessary at present to contemplate the chances of war and is equally in favour of a congress but he does not think that a previous exchange of ideas and declarations in writing between the different cabinets would only be a useless loss of time—(an opinion which would lead to the inference that Count Andrassy has already come to an agreement with Russia.)

Prince Bismarck, on the contrary, believes that a previous exchange of ideas with England, France and Italy would increase

the chances of success of a congress. There can be no doubt that a constant, confidential and intimate exchange of ideas has been, and is being, carried on between the three empires and the cabinets of Berlin, St. Petersburg and Vienna, and it is not improbable that by the time the congress does meet, Russia, Austria and Germany will have again come to a complete agreement among themselves in regard to the partition or redistribution of power in the Balkan peninsula. . . ."

Bismarck's mediation, which was meanwhile being carried on, not only between England and Russia, but between Austria and Russia as well, was proceeding at Friedrichsruhe under great difficulties, as he was taken very ill towards the end of April.

The doctors diagnosed his complaints as a complication of rheumatism, erysipelas and shingles—a truly terrifying state of health for a statesman burdened with such responsibilities and anxieties as Bismarck.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the differences between England and Russia had come to a point where he could not hope for a successful issue to his labours, and Bülow was instructed to inform Lord Odo Russell that Russia's proposals, objections and arrangements were of a purely military nature, and Prince Bismarck felt that he could not well interfere with the views of the naval and military authorities on the matter, or make himself responsible for them, and suggested that the time had come for direct negotiations between Shuvalov and Lord Augustus Loftus. He promised to be at their disposal for purely political questions and asserted his agreement with the British view that the principal points at issue must be decided before a conference could meet with any hope of success.<sup>2</sup>

Salisbury was decidedly of this opinion too, and for the next few weeks the Chancelleries of Europe were busy with secret bargainings. Lord Odo heard that Bismarck was having success with the Austrian negotiations, and that in return for a rectification of the Bulgarian and Montenegrin frontiers, Austria had consented to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. The new frontiers were not known to his informant, but Russia was said to intend holding Roumania until negotiations were complete. Roumania would submit to the loss of Bessarabia, but hoped for an addition

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 904. No. 284. To Lord Salisbury. 26 April 1878.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 286. 27 April 1878.

to the Dobrudja, to give her a bridge on the Danube. This mediation rendered it very unlikely that Austria would oppose Russia by war. Two days later he was even more explicit, and was able to indicate the exact boundaries—"To the east and to the south the frontiers proposed at the conference of Constantinople last year. To the west a straight line of frontier drawn from the south end of Serbia at Urania towards Orfani in the gulf of Rendina, which would leave Turkey in possession of Kavalla and the Ægean coast."<sup>1</sup> It was probably information like this that made Salisbury think that Austria was "shifty" though, indeed, he was playing a deep diplomatic game of his own at the time; meantime he asked Russell to inform his confidant that Shuvalov "stated privately that the only Austrian proposition that had been made was that made to Ignatyev, and that even that had not been agreed to."<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime Shuvalov, in possession of Salisbury's terms, broke his journey to St. Petersburg at Berlin, with Salisbury's permission to tell Bismarck all. The result of his interview remained secret, but he was known to have spoken with gratitude of Lord Salisbury's manner to him.<sup>3</sup> The visit was followed by a period of "excessive reserve and reticence" on the part of the German Foreign Office, but, knowing all he did, Lord Odo could not believe that this reticence was real. He thought the Chancellor was working out a scheme, and that the "three Northern Powers agreed to procrastinate and gain time so as to prolong the phase foreshadowed by Prince Bismarck in his speech of 19 February . . . the advantage of which would be to accustom public opinion in Europe gradually to the partition of Turkey which the 'honest broker' had undertaken to realize for his Russian and Austrian friends."<sup>4</sup> If Lord Odo was right Shuvalov was not so wrong as Lady Gwendolen Cecil suggests in saying that the unexpected acceptance by Britain of the Asiatic annexations caused him "displeased astonishment."

The success of Shuvalov's mission and the signature of the agreement meant that the congress could meet, but the un-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 904. No. 291. To Lord Salisbury. 29 April 1878.

<sup>2</sup>Endorsement on Russell's despatch just quoted.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 905. No. 320. To Lord Salisbury. Confidential. 11 May 1878.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 905. No. 332. To Lord Salisbury. Most Confidential. 14 May 1878.



expected leakage of the memorandum caused great embarrassment to the Government—but even so Salisbury's methods of extricating himself can hardly be justified. First denying it altogether, he then, as soon as Lord Odo Russell's appointment as third plenipotentiary was decided upon, sent him a list of instructions, some of which can only be described as disingenuous. Knowing that Lord Odo Russell knew that an agreement had been reached about Batoum, it is difficult to understand how he could have written on 8 June a full week after the agreement had been signed: "There is no ground for believing that Russia will willingly give way in respect to Batoum, Kars or Ardahan; and it is possible that the arguments of England urged in Congress will receive little assistance from other Powers, and will not be able to shake her resolution in this respect. You will not, on that account, abstain from earnestly pressing upon them and upon Russia the justice of abstaining from annexations which are unconnected with the professed objects of the war and profoundly distasteful to the populations concerned; and the expediency, in regard to the future tranquillity of Asia, of forbearing to shake so perilously the position of the Government of Turkey. In the event of the failure in this respect, of the efforts of the English Plenipotentiaries, you will be made acquainted with the course which H.M.G. have decided to pursue."<sup>1</sup> That this was meant to throw dust in the eyes of Russell, no one need pretend, the only explanation that covers the facts seems to be that Salisbury having denied the agreement, this despatch was written with an eye to publication in a blue book. It was Salisbury's misfortune that the real agreement also saw the light of day, and could no longer be denied or explained away. After the Congress Mr. Lowe, properly indignant, raised the question in the Commons,<sup>2</sup> and it is only too obvious that it was no mare's nest he had found.

It was a great satisfaction to Lord Odo Russell to know that both Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury were coming to Berlin, and he immediately wired to offer them accommodation at the Embassy, which for some reason they were unable to accept. The interminable question of withdrawal, however, still

<sup>1</sup>Accounts and Papers. 1878. Vol. LXXXII. 8 June.

<sup>2</sup>*Hansard*: 242. 1878. pp.878. ff.

remained unsettled and was like a little fester—it was the first problem that was to face the assembled Powers.

With the arrival of the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in Berlin, Lord Odo Russell's despatches for the time being became merely formal.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN

[1878]

*At that time everybody was telling everybody else to take something that belonged to somebody else.*

—DILKE.

*Preliminaries*—the language question—place of meeting—the first assembly. *Work of the Congress*—Lord Beaconsfield's opening speech—strained relations between England and Russia—Lord Odo's work mainly on committees behind the scenes—Bulgarian Question—Bismarck's relief at its settlement—his speeding-up policy—perpetual quibbles between England and Russia over boundaries—final agreement—the treaty signed.

WITH the arrival of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury in Berlin, the British Ambassador's responsibilities underwent a change, but were no less important and onerous than before. As both his chiefs were now in direct touch with him his despatches can no longer be drawn upon and therefore the account of the congress cannot be more than a thumbnail sketch. He had ceased for the time being to be the intermediary between the Foreign Office and Bismarck, but his eminent colleagues were to find in him their right-hand man in two vital matters. The social side of the British delegation was above reproach,<sup>1</sup> and the drudgery of committee work behind the scenes was faithfully performed. His fluency in French and German more than balanced the serious limitations of his colleagues, though the language difficulty cropped up almost

<sup>1</sup>It was the usual custom to hold a reception at the Embassy every Monday evening. *Times*, 18 June 1878. "In the evening Lady Odo's reception; very full and a splendid house. She is out and out the leader of fashion in Berlin—plays her part admirably."

"De sa personne (Lord Odo Russell) jeune encore, est le type du parfait gentleman ou, pour mieux dire, le représentant le plus brillant de l'aristocratie britannique." *Le Congrès en Miniature*. par un Diplomat (anon).

biscuits were served in an adjoining room. The British and French delegations arrived last, and the diplomatic world having watched with interest the historic spectacle of the first meeting between Beaconsfield and Gorchakov, a move was made into the great ballroom which, sumptuously restored, was to be the scene of the labours of the congress.

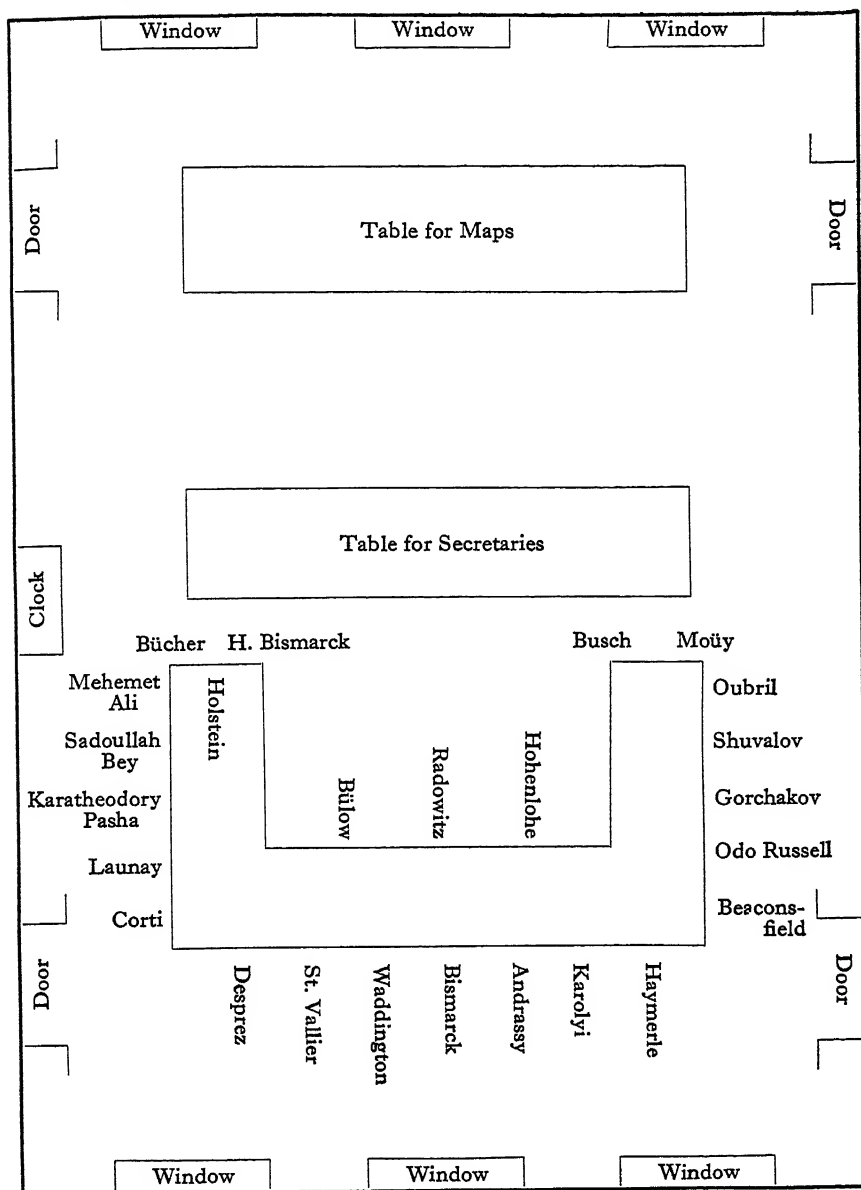
The statesmen took their seats round a green horseshoe table. The president's chair was in the middle, and was taken by Bismarck after his unanimous election to the presidency on the proposal of Andrassy. France, happily on better terms with Germany since St. Vallier's advent, was on his left and Austria on his right. England sat next to Austria and Italy to France. Farther down, at a discreet distance from the difficult Disraeli and next to the diplomatic Lord Odo Russell, sat Gorchakov and his colleagues, opposite their late enemy the Porte. Radowitz, the recorder, sat opposite Bismarck, assisted by Prince Hohenlohe and Bülow. Bismarck himself was responsible for this arrangement. His German colleagues were originally placed by him, but he objected, "I do not think Hohenlohe or Bülow will have any difficulty in agreeing with me, but I am less certain of Andrassy and Waddington. I therefore prefer these latter beside me, and Bülow and Hohenlohe farther off."<sup>1</sup>

The first formalities over, Lord Beaconsfield made his famous speech.<sup>2</sup> Gorchakov and Shuvalov refused to entertain any proposal to withdraw, and Bismarck hastened to propose the postponement of this question. All with the exception of Turkey were only too relieved, and when the Turkish delegate tried to protest against Shuvalov's assumption that Christian lives would be endangered by the withdrawal, he was reminded that the discussion was closed, but the opening skirmish nevertheless rather alarmed the congress. Nobody was quite sure how far Lord Beaconsfield was prepared to go, and an incident like this on the opening day did not bode too well for its success, nor were the prospects brighter when Lord Salisbury and Prince Gorchakov proceeded to express widely differing opinions on the advisability of admitting the Greek delegation to their

<sup>1</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 207-208.

<sup>2</sup>Hohenlohe thought that if Lord Beaconsfield really had left England with peaceful intentions, as Lionel Rothschild stated, his opening speech was maladroit. "He only succeeded in making Austria and Russia quickly come to terms with each other. . . ." *Ibid.* 210.

PLAN OF THE HALL OF THE CONGRESS OF BERLIN  
SHEWING THE SEATS OF THE PLENIPOTENTIARIES



From *Illustrated London News*, 22 June 1878, p. 587

Note: The positions as given in the *I.L.N.* do not quite tally with those indicated by Radowitz in his *Memoirs*, and I have followed the order of the latter. *Auf. u. Errin*: II. 38. One obvious error in the *News* is that instead of Radowitz, the name of Rantzau is given.

deliberations.<sup>1</sup> There were few regrets when Bismarck closed the sitting for the day.

Before the congress met again Bismarck sought an interview with Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. Lord Odo Russell warned his colleagues that the Chancellor probably wanted to explore the extent of the British demands, but he contented himself with expounding "rambling, amusing, egotistical" biographical details, and left both statesmen wondering what his visit portended.<sup>2</sup>

The first business session met on Monday 18 June, and by this time most of the plenipotentiaries had had opportunities of taking the measure of their colleagues. Lord Odo Russell had not been present at the important conference between England, Austria and Russia, which met to settle the new boundary of Bulgaria and the power of the Sultan over his mutilated province, but he had had a very busy morning nevertheless. After receiving with Bülow a deputation of Roumanian Jews who had come to plead their cause he accompanied Lord Beaconsfield on a visit to Shuvalov at noon, and yet found time to be present at an interview between Lord Salisbury and Waddington.<sup>3</sup>

The second meeting of the conference was not so dazzling as the first; the plenipotentiaries, no longer resplendent in uniform, arrived in morning dress. Gorchakov who had been taken ill, recovered sufficiently "after eating some strawberries" to attend the session.<sup>4</sup> The Anglo-Russian agreement, into the details of which it is not proposed to enter, as they do not immediately concern the career of Lord Odo Russell, had already been made public, to the extreme discomfiture of Lord Salisbury. He had little taste for the limelight at any time, but it was particularly unpleasant at this meeting, where the first business was to consider his proposal to admit Greece to the deliberations of the Powers. He championed her claims on the ground that since the Slavs had a victorious patron in Russia, the non-Slav races of the Balkans had a right to be heard, too. Gorchakov indignantly repudiated the idea that his sympathies were confined to the Slav Christians. The dis-

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* II. p.331.

<sup>2</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 319-320. Cecil: *Salisbury* II. 283.

<sup>3</sup>*Times.* 17 June 1878.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* 18 June 1878.

cussion threatened to meander off into generalities, and as France had a counter-proposition to make, the question was adjourned.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps no incident illustrates more clearly the way in which the people whose interests were most involved were made the pawns of the Great Powers.

It had already been decided to deal with the treaty, not in order of its articles, but rather in the order of their likelihood to endanger European peace. Great Britain was the Power most likely to go to the length of war and she had fastened her chief objections on the proposed new state of Bulgaria and the limitations of the authority of the Sultan; and so Bismarck bent his energies to finding out what she really wanted, and then did his utmost to see that she was satisfied. Not until these questions were settled did he feel confident that the congress would be a success, even although he knew that bargains and deals had been made beforehand.<sup>2</sup> In the congress of Berlin there was no trace of the equivocal attitude which had filled the British Government with such profound mistrust eighteen months before at the conference of Constantinople. Bismarck was staking everything on peace. The two attempts on the Emperor's life had been danger signals from another quarter, and united Germany must gather all her mighty resources for a conflict with this new foe. A war between two great Powers might open the floodgates he wanted closed. He was growing increasingly alarmed at the economic situation, for it was clear that the garish prosperity of the first days of the Empire had passed away for good and that more anxious times were in store. In view of the Emperor's advanced age, too, Bismarck had to take into his calculations the possibility of an early succession of the Crown Prince to the throne, with all that that might involve in change of policy. He therefore spared no pains to settle these vital points and then manifested an ardent desire to speed up the business of the congress as much as possible. A commission was appointed to prepare business for the full sittings and to settle difficult

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* II. p.334.

<sup>2</sup>Lady Gwendolen Cecil has already corrected Buckle's imaginative account of the Anglo-Russian negotiations on the Bulgarian question. Cecil: *Salisbury* II. 283-284. At the time it was common property that "Russia's surrender" preceded Bismarck's visit to Lord Beaconsfield. "Yesterday afternoon, when Russia's acquiescence in the English programme had been communicated at Berlin, Prince Bismarck called upon Lord Beaconsfield to invite him to a family dinner in the evening." *Times*. 24 June 1878.

matters of detail which might cause endless delay. Lord Odo Russell, Oubril, Launay, Haymerle, Desprez and Karatheodory were the colleagues of Prince Hohenlohe, who acted as president of this important commission, "a pleasant combination" as he himself remarked.<sup>1</sup> Its first meeting took place at 1 o'clock on 28 June and it met with great regularity for the remainder of the congress. For three hours on 3 July the commission considered the organization of Eastern Roumelia. Karatheodory, with a fine impartiality, considering that he was a Christian himself, protested that a Mussulman ought to be appointed as governor. "The negotiations," said Hohenlohe, "were very tedious. We were not finished until 5 o'clock."<sup>2</sup>

England and Russia continued to quibble over the frontiers to the bitter end, and it would be a task as profitless as impossible to unravel the precise details of their interminable differences. At the sitting of the commission on 3 July the Bulgarian frontier came up for discussion. A misunderstanding had arisen. Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury seemed inclined to attribute to Russian trickery what appeared to the other plenipotentiaries the Englishmen's ignorance of geography, and Lieutenant-colonel Bluhme, of the Prussian general staff, was instructed to submit the question to the commission of experts. Hohenlohe, after a long conversation with Lord Salisbury, remained convinced that he was in fact making fresh demands, but he proposed a compromise to Shuvalov, who begged him to defer it till the last moment.<sup>3</sup> Bluhme, meanwhile, had met with no success in his negotiations, and Bismarck, "irritated at the English pretensions"<sup>4</sup> said that the matter must be brought before the full congress.

"At the close of the debate," said Hohenlohe, "I asked permission to speak, and asked the Chancellor to put the Bulgarian frontier question on the order of the day for Monday, since I was reluctantly compelled to say that the commission could not agree on the subject. The Chancellor was prepared to do so, but remarked that the delegates of the military commission had no more to do than to respect the resolutions

<sup>1</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 217.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* 220.

<sup>3</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 219-221.

<sup>4</sup>Over a week before, Lord Salisbury had noticed that Bismarck was "decidedly losing his temper." Cecil: *Lord Salisbury* II. 287.



of the congress and base their proposals on them. I replied that in the present case the difficulty did not lie with the military commission, but in our commission, since the instructions of individual plenipotentiaries were defective. Odo Russell was naturally angry at this. He said nothing, but after the sitting declared he would take no further part in the sittings of the commission. But he allowed himself afterwards to be mollified by Shuvalov."<sup>1</sup> It was probably after this little breeze that Gorchakov and Lord Beaconsfield were left to fight the matter out between them, and by Sunday night an agreement had been reached and at last Bluhme received the necessary instructions.<sup>2</sup> No sooner was this knotty point settled, than a new difficulty arose over another frontier—this time the Asiatic boundary. Lord Salisbury declared that Gorchakov produced a map with a different boundary from the one previously agreed upon,<sup>3</sup> and Prince Hohenlohe again had the thankless task of accommodating the difference. He himself was not at all sure whether the compromise was a sensible one, and even on 12 July, the day before the congress closed, "as there was not entire unanimity in the report commission on the Asiatic frontier, some interruption in the sitting was necessary."<sup>4</sup>

All was ready for signature on the 13th. With the congress of Berlin (only a very side-long glimpse of which can be obtained from sources dealing with the life of Lord Odo Russell)<sup>5</sup> another chapter in the history of the Eastern Question was ended—with the carrying out of its provisions a fresh one was begun. Lord Beaconsfield, feeling that its results more than justified his policy throughout, returned to London to receive from the gratified Queen the highest honour it was in her power to

<sup>1</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 222.

<sup>2</sup>Cecil: *Lord Salisbury* II. 293. For an exhaustive discussion see Sumner: *Russia and the Balkans*. App. IX.

<sup>3</sup>Buckle: *Disraeli* VI. 337. Strangely enough, the same thing appears to have happened to Lord Salisbury at Constantinople, only on this occasion Salisbury blamed Ignatiev for the trick. Cecil: *Salisbury* II. 110.

<sup>4</sup>"After a long search we found a small piece which we could take away again from the Russians; some mountain ridges out of which we made a so-called *ligne de conciliation*, which was accepted. None of us knew whether it was a sensible frontier. The maps of that part of Armenia are so inaccurate and contradictory that it is difficult to settle the frontiers from here." Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 224-226.

<sup>5</sup>No attempt has been made to write a history of the congress here, nor even to summarize its work and decisions. The fullest account of the congress is given in Sumner: *Russia and the Balkans*.

bestow. He left Lord Odo Russell behind to grapple with the points of detail arising out of the deliberations of the congress, and the still more tedious task of helping to work out its actual decisions. The next few years were not to be easy ones in Berlin.

## BOOK III

### AFTER THE TREATY

*To keep the peace is better than to figure prominently in congresses where treaties of peace are signed after war, and to have solid influence in the private councils of those to whom the destinies of nations are committed will serve the ambition of a genuine diplomatist better than to stand before the world in a blazing light of celebrity.*

TIMES—26 August 1884.







LORD AMPHILL

AFTER A MEZZOTINT FROM A POSTHUMOUS PORTRAIT  
BY SIR CHARLES HOLROYD

## CHAPTER XII

### THE NEW SITUATION

[1878]

Appreciation of Lord Odo's work during the Congress—His view of its results—political implications of the Treaty—its economic importance—immediate questions of detail—Russell on leave—position on his return—Bismarck's relations to Gorchakov and St. Vallier towards the end of the year.

"I DO not now speak of Lord Odo Russell, who discharged, as he was sure to discharge, his duties with great ability; but whose labours were chiefly in a province different from that of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury. . . ." These were Gladstone's words. His colleagues and the Queen were no less appreciative.

"I have had the honour of representing to the Queen and Her Majesty's Government," wrote Salisbury, "the very valuable assistance which Your Excellency rendered to the Earl of Beaconsfield and myself in your capacity of Third Plenipotentiary on behalf of Great Britain at the Congress of Berlin.

Your Excellency's assiduity in the onerous and responsible labours with which your diplomatic duties were discharged, have earned for Your Excellency the high appreciation of all those who had the honour of being associated with you on this occasion; and it is with the greatest satisfaction that I have received the Queen's commands to convey to you Her Majesty's entire approval of your conduct as Her Majesty's plenipotentiary, and the thanks of Her Majesty's ministers for the efficient manner in which you represented the Government of Great Britain throughout the Congress."<sup>1</sup>

For his part, the Ambassador felt a great relief from the strain

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 244. 316. No. 369. Lord Salisbury to Odo Russell. 19 July 1878.

and suspense of the past few months. Although doubting the permanence of the settlement, and half expecting a sudden collapse of the Turkish Empire in Europe, he had been more impressed by Lord Beaconsfield than he had expected,<sup>1</sup> and whereas earlier in the year he had been constrained to prophesy moodily that the Congress would merely register the changes embodied in the Treaty of San Stephano, now he could say, "I am proud of the results of our diplomacy." Another chapter of the history was closed—what the new one would unfold, no one could yet foretell.

The meeting of the Congress had not been dictated by political necessity alone, but by urgent economic and financial considerations of the gravest nature. National finances were in a precarious condition everywhere. In England there was no more talk of abolishing the income tax as Gladstone had suggested in 1874, in Russia the country was on the verge of revolution and bankruptcy. In Germany Bismarck was so nonplussed and concerned at the unexpected situation that he was already planning revolutionary measures to cope with it. Neither France nor Austria were happy about their financial conditions. Trade was declining and distress was growing everywhere; men connected these things with the uncertainty in the Balkans and concluded that a more settled state of things in the Turkish Empire would be immediately reflected in a revival of prosperity. This means that the Congress was a far deeper thing than the expression of Disraeli's determination that Russia should not seize all the spoils of her war with Turkey. It expressed also the subconscious but irresistible determination of Europe to solve by peaceful means a common problem lest all were involved in a common ruin. The driving force was indeed economic, but the statesmen of that period could only visualize a political solution, and while all were afraid of the situation, all hoped to profit by it.

The Russian solution, which Disraeli described as reducing the Porte to a state of subjection to Russia, had failed to find favour, and fell immediately to the ground. The Congress, on the other hand, relieved the Sultan of his responsibilities on the outskirts of his European dominions, and readjusted his frontiers in other places, but it remained to be seen whether

<sup>1</sup>Holland: *Devonshire* II. 213.



their labours represented anything more tangible than mere lines drawn on a map. As Lord Beaconsfield saw it, "it was to re-establish the dominion of the Sultan on a national basis, to condense and concentrate his authority and to take the opportunity . . . of improving the condition of his subjects" . . . "and to break up and permanently prevent the alliance of the three empires," and he believed there "never was a general diplomatic result more completely effected."<sup>1</sup>

The concentration of the Sultan's power was indeed accomplished at the price of increased rivalry between Austria and Russia, for Germany the Congress proved to be the sharpening of the sword of Damocles, since Bismarck, whose policy was to avoid choosing between Austria and Russia, and who hoped to soften this rivalry by a partition of Turkey into spheres of influence, found this solution complicated by the energetic appearance of Great Britain upon the scene. In this new situation Bismarck was confronted by an estranged Russia. The following year, therefore, saw a reorientation of his policy. He made cordial overtures to France, negotiated the Austrian Alliance and even toyed with the idea of persuading Lord Beaconsfield to join it.

For the moment, however, all was quiet in Berlin. Tedious verbal details occupied much of Lord Odo Russell's time and led to the exchange of lengthy letters with Lord Tenterden upon such exciting subjects as the omission of the word "près" in Article 58.<sup>2</sup> Greece displayed disconcerting energy in pressing for the fulfilment of Article 24, which provided for mediation in the event of failure to arrive at a direct agreement with the Porte—a contingency which the most optimistic could not fail to foresee.<sup>3</sup> Her activities led to a further flood of telegraphic communications, while the British Foreign Office, anxious to expedite the carrying out of the Treaty, instructed Lord Odo to ascertain whether Germany would be prepared to co-operate at once in sending a commissioner to Constantinople "to assist in elaborating the organization of Eastern Roumelia" in accordance with Article 18.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Disraeli* VI. 351, 367.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 244. 316. No. 265a. 16 July 1878.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 244. 316. No. 269a, D. Salisbury to Odo Russell, 21 July 1878.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 391a, Sir D. J. Pauncefort to Odo Russell, 6 August 1878. The English Commissioner was Sir Drummond Wolff.

After a few weeks' attention to this kind of detail, with which he was to become all too familiar during the next few years, Lord Odo Russell took his annual leave from August to the end of October in a very different frame of mind from that of the previous year. When he returned, he found that considerable changes had taken place in the situation in Berlin. Bismarck's interview with the Papal Nuncio, indicative of a change of ecclesiastical policy, had taken place, strong measures had been adopted against Social-Democracy, and the Chancellor had already begun to turn towards a different fiscal system. With regard to the Treaty, he was not satisfied with Turkey's attitude, dismissing as frivolous her explanation that the delay in ratification "was entirely due to the lengthy nature of the preamble . . . the transcription of which, in gilt letters, was a lengthy process,"<sup>1</sup> nor would he admit that so naïve an excuse in any way accounted for the delay in carrying out the demands of the Treaty, especially in Greece and Montenegro. He had even gone so far as to propose sending a joint circular of protest to the Porte, signed by the six Powers;<sup>2</sup> but Lord Salisbury not sharing this impatience, no circular had been sent.<sup>3</sup> The improved relations with France heralded by the happy appointment of the Count de St. Vallier to Berlin, had been maintained, and Bismarck seemed inclined to support her colonial aspirations in North Africa. It almost looked as if he hoped the Bey of Tunis would foot the bill for Alsace-Lorraine. In the East, Austria was busy occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina, with more bloodshed than she had anticipated, though Lord Odo Russell thought that if she had obeyed Bismarck's advice and entered Bosnia at once she would have had no trouble.<sup>4</sup> Relations had become very strained with Russia, and Bismarck had already given way to violent outbursts against Gorchakov which the British Ambassador was quite unable to explain.<sup>5</sup>

This bitterness became a matter of public comment towards the end of the year. Bismarck made no secret of his belief that Gorchakov was a "calamity to Russia and her friends" and when these outbursts reached London via Paris and were com-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 907. No. 499. Mr. Dering to Lord Salisbury, 28 August 1878.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 503. 31 August 1878.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 244. 316. No. 472. Confidential. Lord Salisbury to Mr. Dering.

<sup>4</sup>Holland: *Devonshire* II. 213.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

municated again to Lord Odo Russell, he thought the time had come to give his own impressions of the matter.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 29 November 1878.<sup>1</sup>—

“... Prince Bismarck is much given to express in private conversation the feelings and thoughts that happen to animate him at the moment with startling frankness—his friends call it ‘thinking aloud.’

I have myself heard him express the views attributed to him by Mr. Waddington’s correspondent and I have also noticed that the only Russian he does not find fault with is Count Shuvalov, whom he invariably describes as a true statesman, straightforward, well-intentioned and trustworthy.

His hatred of Prince Gorchakov dates a long way back, but personally he treats the Russian Chancellor with the greatest deference and apparent devotion, whenever he passes through Berlin.

As a rule, when Prince Bismarck enters upon the chapter of his grievances against Prince Gorchakov he recounts two anecdotes which do not appear in Mr. Waddington’s communication to Lord Lyons.

As they have a certain historical interest and complete Mr. Waddington’s information, I will place them on record in this ‘Secret Despatch.’

Prince Bismarck relates that when he was Prussian Minister in Russia, and walking on a warm summer evening in the month of August at Tsarko Selo with the Czar, His Majesty had, after some preparatory soundings, disclosed his wish to negotiate a rectification of frontier with his uncle, the King of Prussia, which would give Germany a portion of the Baltic provinces, and Russia some equivalent elsewhere.

Prince Bismarck says he declined at once to listen to these overtures, which he took to be a bribe offered for Russia’s co-operation in the East, and the subject was allowed to drop.

Some years later after he had been appointed Prime Minister the King of Prussia one day alluded to the subject, which had been imparted to His Majesty by his nephew the Czar, and reproached him (Prince Bismarck) with having concealed so advantageous an offer from his sovereign.

He (Bismarck) had thereupon declared to the King that rather than enter upon a policy of the nature proposed by the Emperor of Russia he would resign and oppose it from his place in Parliament.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 910. No. 643.

The King, he says, reluctantly yielded to his arguments—but Prince Gorchakov never ceased to bring forward this incident as a means of undermining him (Bismarck) in the estimation of his royal master the King of Prussia, who still regrets not having been allowed to acquire the Baltic provinces for Prussia.

The other anecdote is as follows: while the Duc Decazes was in office in France, and secretly soliciting the alliance of Russia, to carry on a war of revenge against Germany, he (Prince Bismarck) discovered that Prince Gorchakov had the treachery to propose to the Czar to entertain the Duc Decazes' offers, and to make overtures to Austria for a tripartite alliance with a view to taking revenge on the new Empire—and breaking it up by a simultaneous invasion of German territory.

The Czar had indignantly declined to listen to his Chancellor's perfidious advice.

These facts, Prince Bismarck declares, sufficiently explain and justify his hatred of Prince Gorchakov.

I am unable to judge of the truth of the first of these anecdotes. The second seems to me to be an extremely exaggerated view of the attitude assumed by Prince Gorchakov at the time of the 'Scare' in 1875, when he interposed his good offices between France and Germany and came with the Czar to Berlin to declare that Russia would not allow Germany to attack France a second time with impunity.

In relating these anecdotes the German Chancellor does not appear to realize that he is simply illustrating his rival, Prince Gorchakov's success in compelling Germany, however reluctantly, to lend her moral support to Russia's Eastern policy.

The steady and powerful support Prince Bismarck gives to Russian policy notwithstanding his personal antipathy to Russian statesmen is a puzzle to many.

The Crown Prince himself, since acting as regent during the Emperor's recovery, appealed to Prince Bismarck for some explanation of his Russian policy.

Prince Bismarck replied in a secret memorandum written in his own hand, explaining his standpoint and motives as follows:

It is, he says, his deep conviction that the safety of Germany with her defenceless frontiers, and the peace of Europe, on which her safety rests, depend principally upon the maintenance of the Dreikaiserbund, or 'Northern Alliance,' and for that reason he thinks it was indispensable to foster the belief in Russia and Austria, that they had more real support for their Eastern policy from Germany than from any other Power in Europe.

While now Russia and Austria are still occupied in Turkey,

and while England, France and Italy are enforcing the Treaty of Berlin and protecting Turkey against Russian intrigues, Germany can enjoy freedom from foreign complications and safety at home and abroad."

If he was angry with Gorchakov, Bismarck made no secret of his cordiality towards the Count de St. Vallier. Early in 1879 he was invited to Lauenburg, where he was received with so much warmth that he returned to Berlin firmly convinced that Bismarck's professions of desiring friendly relations with France were absolutely sincere. Soon after his return he called on Lord Odo Russell to give him his impressions of his visit.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Most Confidential. 8 January 1879.<sup>1</sup>—

"... I gathered from the Count de St. Vallier's very interesting accounts that Prince Bismarck has at last and happily got over his suspicions and alarms about French revenge, that the present Republican Government inspires him with confidence, and that he offers Mr. Waddington to join hands and act in concert and harmony with him for the good of their respective countries. As a proof of the sincerity of his sentiments, Prince Bismarck began, says M. de St. Vallier, by offering his good offices in regard to the Tunis difficulty, and promised the support of Germany should France at any time be compelled to establish a protectorate over Tunis. He went on to assure M. de St. Vallier that he looked upon the good understanding now existing between France and England as one of the best guarantees of peace in Europe, and as such he attached great importance to it from a German point of view. Germany, he said, wanted peace internally as well as externally.

Socialism had covered Germany like a net, the meshes of which could only be ripped open by special legislation, and he was now happy to find that the Anti-Socialist laws of 31 October last had already torn the net-like organization of Socialism to pieces and struck terror among the Socialists.

Talking of the commercial policy of Germany, M. de St. Vallier says that Prince Bismarck assured him that it would be a mistake to think him an absolute Protectionist.

No doubt he felt it to be his duty to protect those interests in Germany which absolutely required protection to save them from total decay, but he had no intention of adopting the principles of protection as the sole basis of his commercial policy. A

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 931. No. 18.

duty on iron had become necessary to protect the iron-masters of Germany against England, and a duty on French wine was called for to protect the vinegrowers of Germany against those of France. Above all, the agricultural interests of Germany required to be protected and promoted because German farmers could no longer compete against the importation of cheap Russian corn and cheap American meat, both of which would have to be subjected to a small import duty.

By denouncing the commercial treaties with Belgium and Switzerland Germany would be perfectly free a year hence to negotiate new commercial treaties with foreign Powers on the basis of an autonomous tariff, which the Reichstag would elaborate in the course of this year.

Talking of the Treaty of Berlin, Prince Bismarck said he had no reason to doubt that it would be completely and faithfully carried out, even though Russia might linger to the last hour in Turkey and expose herself to have her ears pulled by England, who, to his mind, showed a tendency to pull them more roughly than was exactly conducive to the re-establishment of intimate relations between those two Powers for some time to come.

He, Prince Bismarck, objected to the principle of mixed occupations and would never consent to send a German soldier to Turkey, or pay a pfennig towards the maintenance of a foreign Gendarmerie.

If the other signatory Powers chose to run the risks attendant on mixed occupations he would not object, but if consulted, he would certainly advise against a measure which must ultimately lead to war. . . ."

The Count was very anxious to know how much importance his English colleague attached to Bismarck's assurances of satisfaction at an Anglo-French understanding. Lord Odo was inclined to take them at their face value—"Germany required peace to become prosperous," he remarked, "and an Anglo-French alliance was a guarantee of peace which Prince Bismarck as a true patriot could only welcome in the interests of the Empire he had created and must wish to consolidate while he lived." His impression was not long in being confirmed. At Bismarck's request, Bülow paid him a visit, shortly after this, and repeated the Chancellor's opinion that he regarded the Anglo-French alliance with favour as a hopeful sign of peace. Lord Odo thought this a golden opportunity to ask Bülow

privately "and in the strictest confidence what secret motives could have prompted the doubly welcome message of sympathy from the great Chancellor, which was already intended to strengthen the bonds already existing between England and France". Prince Bülow smiled and whispered: "He thinks Russia will renew her attempts again and again to make an ally of France, and that England alone can prevent it, so that Germany has the greatest interest in a strong and lasting Anglo-French alliance, which excludes, while it lasts, the possibility of a Franco-Russian alliance." While not doubting this, Lord Odo Russell privately wondered if Bismarck were not also visualizing a Franco-German alliance, which he could have in exchange for concessions over the Lorraine frontier from a republican government.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 931. No. 22. To Lord Salisbury. Secret. 11 January 1879. "N.B. This is *really secret*," endorsed Lord Tenterden.

## CHAPTER XIII

# INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE [1878-1884]

*With all the admiration which I feel for his genius, yet I cannot hide from myself that he has achieved the architecture of our greatness from very costly material . . . as he himself says that we will find in this building neither security nor peace it seems to me that the cost of building is too high.*

—V. SCHWEINITZ ON BISMARCK.

*Internal problems facing Bismarck in 1879*—his reading of the situation—fiscal reform—Lord Ampthill's account—his suggestion as to the attitude of Great Britain—resignation of the President of the Reichstag—split in the Liberal party—the new duties passed—the railway question.

*The Army Bill*—difficulty of introducing it at the moment—Moltke's justification—the "education" of public opinion—the debate—passing of the bill.

*The Anti-Socialist Legislation*—result of the attempt on the life of the Emperor—the Anti-Socialist bill in the House—opposition—Bismarck's anger—murder of the Tsar—idea of international conference against nihilism abandoned—complicated situation in Germany—Bismarck's tactics—imperial rescript—further parliamentary struggle—Emperor's reprimand—passing of the bill—other constitutional changes.

*End of the Kulturkampf*—death of Pius IX—tentatives of Leo XIII towards peace—Bismarck's attitude—resignation of Falk—first definite concessions of the Pope—Bismarck's response—difficulties in Landtag—Bismarck's views—mission of Baron von Schlözer to Rome—successful progress of negotiations—further steps towards peace—position at Lord Ampthill's death.

## I

OF the many pitfalls that beset the statesman's path, one is more difficult to avoid than any other. It is that of concentrating upon the pressing problem of the moment, and of neglecting other questions of apparently minor import-



ance for the time being. It is a danger almost beyond the power of man to avoid, so long as human activities are bounded by limitations of time, space and endurance, and so long as human foresight can never predict with certainty which of countless problems will become acute; but the pitfall often proves fatal, since it is during the period of neglect that the question becomes dangerous. Few statesmen have avoided this trap more cleverly than Bismarck, and his almost superhuman skill in dealing with many problems at one time and of taking precautions against all contingencies, perhaps as much as any other quality, raised him to the first rank among the statesmen of the world. Between 1875 and 1878, it is true, Lord Odo Russell had watched him devote much time and attention to the Eastern Question, so likely to embroil Europe in war, but all this time he had not been unmindful of the growth of social and economic problems within the Empire, and he was preparing to grapple with them with characteristic energy and originality. As Lord Odo Russell traced that wonderful career he observed how the Chancellor, faced with ever-new problems, attacked and dealt with them from one point of view, and one only—that of the unity and welfare of Germany as he understood it.

If Bismarck had ever really believed that Germany, "once in the saddle, would ride of herself," he was being thoroughly disillusioned. The exuberant prosperity of the early days of the new Reich, and its consequent buoyant enthusiasm, had unaccountably given way to an alarming decline in almost every branch of trade and industry.<sup>1</sup> A heavy load of taxation was crushing out the optimism of many who had perhaps been over sanguine in identifying the union of Germany with the millennium. Disillusion wedded to the natural human hankering after a scapegoat breeds revolution, and nobody understood this better than the illustrious statesman who was responsible for the Germany of 1878. He looked around and saw, not a

<sup>1</sup>"... I have the honour to forward to Your Lordship herewith a memorandum on the state of the various industries and manufactures at Berlin during the year 1877, which I have drawn up from reliable sources.

Your Lordship will see that, with one or two exceptions, the history of trade in Berlin is one long tale of disaster, and it is only now that the decisions of the Berlin Congress have given hopes of a permanent peace that some confidence has returned to the capitalists, and hopes are entertained here that the worst of the crisis is past. . . ." Mr. Dering to Lord Salisbury. F.O. 64. 907. No. 474. 9 August 1878.

powerfully defended fatherland, firmly founded on its national army, but a country whose very existence was threatened by the impending expiration of the army law passed with such difficulty in 1873; instead of the united, devoted nation of his desires he saw that the subversive theories of Marx and the disruptive doctrines of Lassalle were gaining more and more hold; instead of religious unity, accomplished by victory over the Catholic Church, he recognized that the Kulturkampf was daily becoming a greater menace to the empire.

Seeing all this, and awake to its significance, he proceeded to take measures to make a fundamental change in the perilous situation. He decided to restore material prosperity by a total revolution in the fiscal system, to place the army upon an absolutely unassailable footing by a new army law, to suppress social democracy and to bring an end to the Kulturkampf. That this policy involved a break with the party that now supported him, and a reconciliation with some of his bitterest enemies, did not weigh too heavily with a statesman whose great strength lay in his conviction that what appeared to him to be the true interests of Germany must be accomplished at all costs,<sup>1</sup> and who had already broken with a party with whom he had had far more in common than ever he had with the national liberals. The story as revealed in Lord Odo Russell's despatches is interesting, and they show that Russell himself appreciated the motives which animated Bismarck's policy.

As always, Bismarck surveyed the ground thoroughly and examined it from all sides before taking action. Away in the country, free from the inevitable interruptions of Berlin life he consulted economic experts, accumulated all his facts and figures, gathered them together in an ordered whole, and then with everything at his fingers' ends launched his programme of fiscal reconstruction from Friedrichsruhe and laid it before the Bundesrat at the end of 1878.<sup>2</sup> This programme announced to the world that Bismarck had decided in favour of a return to the fiscal system which had existed in Prussia from 1815 to 1865.

<sup>1</sup>Wahl: *Deutsche Geschichte* 1. 559. "He concluded with the repeated assurance that he would follow to the bitter end the path 'which I consider right in the interests of the Fatherland, unmoved whether I reap thereby hatred or love, it is all the same to me!'"

<sup>2</sup>Wahl: *Deutsche Geschichte* 1. 543.

*To Lord Salisbury.* 23 December 1878.<sup>1</sup>—

“ . . . His Highness is of opinion that all imports should be subject to a moderate duty with the exception of those raw materials which are indispensable to German industry.

By developing the principles of indirect taxation through imports Prince Bismarck hopes to lessen the burden of indirect taxation which is so irksome to the German taxpayer.

Taking a general view Prince Bismarck looks upon the present commercial circumstances as necessitating a return to protective principles. Germany, he says, is again free since the failure of her negotiations with Austria to be guided solely by her own interests in adopting a new customs tariff, her only ties being the stipulations contained in her treaties with Belgium and Switzerland.

Later on he contemplates negotiating tariff treaties with other Powers, but only after Germany has created an autonomous customs system calculated to place German produce in the most favourable position with regard to that of other countries.

Prince Bismarck ends his letter with a request to the ‘Bundesrath’ to communicate the views he has expressed to the Tariff Revision Commission for their consideration.

As chairman of that commission he had appointed the member for Stuttgart, Herr von Varnbühler—one of the most distinguished protectionists in Germany.

The commission will meet in January and submit their report in the Bundesrath in February next, when the great battle of free trade and protection will be fought over again in the German Parliament during the whole of the coming session. . . .”

Bismarck’s changed economic policy was a broadside against the free trade citadel, and Lord Odo Russell’s despatch caused Lord Salisbury considerable alarm. He therefore instructed him to advise him as to the most expedient means of safeguarding British interests threatened by the proposed tariffs. British trade was already in a deplorable state and he could not regard new restrictions with equanimity. Lord Odo drew his attention to the policy that the British Government was at the time following with regard to France and Italy, and suggested that a similar policy might be the most practical and effective, if it could be carried out, but he felt constrained to point out at the same time that the present state of mind of the German Government was

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 244. 317. No. 77. Commercial.

anything but liberal towards the interests of consumers, and special "pourparlers" would be discouraged as tending to hamper their freedom. He was prepared to suggest general conversations, but if the German Government refused he would advise an *ad hoc* proposal dealing with each specific difficulty as it arose in the course of the Reichstag proceedings.<sup>1</sup> Feeling his own need of advice on such delicate and important matters, he also asked to have a commercial expert attached to his staff.<sup>2</sup> A threat in the *Post* that the iron duties might be made retrospective<sup>3</sup> was sufficiently alarming and there were many economic details that Lord Odo Russell wanted to know.

In February the first skirmishes in the Reichstag took place, and on 31 March an interview between Bismarck and Windthorst indicated the way in which the wind was blowing, for the National Liberal leader, Bennigsen, was unwilling and unable to carry his party along the new path of protection and Bismarck had to seek help from the Conservatives and clericals. The first reading of the tobacco and railway tax bills began on 2 May, and on the 18th Berlin experienced a great sensation.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Confidential. 24 May 1879.<sup>4</sup>—

"The resignation of the President of the Reichstag, Herr von Forckenbeck, is a new triumph of Prince Bismarck's policy.

Herr von Forckenbeck, who is also Burgomaster of Berlin and one of the most distinguished members of the Liberal Party, had, as such, convened a meeting of the representatives of the German cities and municipalities and of the Liberal and National party for the purpose of organizing an agitation against Prince Bismarck's protective tariff, and the duties on corn and cattle throughout the Empire.

Seventy-two cities sent representatives to Berlin and Herr von Forckenbeck addressed them at a banquet given at the Zoological Gardens in a speech marked by its manly independence and eloquent enthusiasm.

Several versions of his speech have been circulated in Berlin, but all agree in the main feature which was an earnest and impressive appeal to the Liberals of Germany to organize as

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 244. 317. No. 79. To Lord Salisbury. Commercial. 30 December 1878.

<sup>2</sup>Cecil: *Salisbury*. III. 216.

<sup>3</sup>*Annual Register* 1878 p.163.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 933. No. 254.

rapidly as possible a party strong enough to resist the policy of the Government and repeal the measures passed by the great Conservative majority of Parliament.

To realize the anomaly of the situation we should suppose, if such were possible, that Mr. Speaker, being also Lord Mayor of London, had conceived the happy thought of convening a meeting of the Opposition in Hyde Park for the purpose of turning out Her Majesty's Government and of repealing the measures adopted by the party in power.

On the day following the banquet Herr von Forckenbeck wrote to the Vice-President of the Reichstag, Dr. Lucius, to resign his presidency and to ask for sick leave.

When Herr von Forckenbeck resumes his seat in the Reichstag it will probably be as a leader of the National Liberal party in the place of Herr von Bennigsen, who appears to be drifting towards the protectionist side of the House. The Reichstag has since selected Herr von Seydenitz President, and will probably elect Herr von Frankenstein Vice-president in the place of Herr von Stauffenberg, who resigned with Herr von Forckenbeck.

The Conservative party, which had so long been in a minority, and which Prince Bismarck had undertaken to lead to victory by his celebrated letter of 15 December last, have hereby carried the election of their candidates for the presidency of the German parliament, which at its opening in March last would have been a hopeless undertaking.

Prince Bismarck, by his personal influence and tact has converted Parliament and the great body of the electors in Germany to his views, and without a general election has fashioned a Liberal Reichstag into a Conservative one.

Prince Bismarck is now master of the situation in Germany."

The water passed quickly under the bridges between May and 12 July, when the final division of the new tariff as a whole, was taken. 217 deputies voted for the duties, and 117 against, but before this a resignation of three members of the Government, ostensibly for other reasons, but really due to the revolution in the policy of the Chancellor, made it possible for him to open the door of office to the Conservatives. The new policy had also split the Liberal party from top to bottom, but, as Lord Odo had pointed out, Bismarck was master of the situation. On 16 July a law appreciably raising the duty on tobacco was published, and this summer saw Germany definitely committed to a protective policy.

The complications of the German railway system had been a preoccupation of Bismarck from the beginning. The confusion and waste involved in a medley of private ownership and individual state proprietorship was anathema to his centralizing mind, and the weakness of such a lack of system in the event of war was among his many nightmares, but the difficulties in the way of state ownership seemed insuperable. His programme, indeed, of the separation of administration and control, and the transfer of control to state authority, had been ready by 1873, and the first step had been taken when Elben's bill, passing on 16 July, had established an imperial board for the direction of railways. But the second step proved too steep. The State Railway Bill of 1874 proposed that the sole control of German railways should be vested in the state, but the opposition was so resolute and determined that this aim could not be realized, and this same opposition prevented the commission, which was appointed in 1879, from presenting any satisfactory report.

Seeing this road closed, Bismarck tried another path. He decided to buy the separate lines piecemeal. A bill offering the Prussian railways for sale to the State was passed by the Landtag 4 June 1876. This was not possible in one transaction, owing to the recalcitrant attitude of the middle states, who refused to buy, but in this year a beginning was made when the Halle-Cassel line was acquired. The administration of the Prussian railways was then transferred to the Minister of Public Works. In 1879 the subject came up once more. The new Finance Minister, Herr Bitter, strongly supported the purchase of the railways. "It was of immense importance for the safety of the state in a military point of view," he said, "and no obstacles should be put in the way of its accomplishment. The price to be paid for these lines could not be held as excessive, and the credit of the state would not suffer from the increase of government bonds."<sup>1</sup> Moltke's eyes were on the scheme from the military point of view also, for he saw how it would simplify the transport of troops in time of war and he saw no reason to think that the public would object to changing their present shares for consuls.<sup>2</sup> In this particular instance these arguments

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 936. No. 539. To Lord Salisbury. 7 November 1879.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 936. No. 614. To Lord Salisbury. 20 December 1879.

carried the day, and as the years passed by more and more railways came under state control. Bismarck's aim, though not entirely achieved, had not altogether failed.<sup>1</sup>

## II

The success of Bismarck's policy was ultimately dependent upon the existence of a strong, loyal, well-disciplined and national army, and by 1880 the time had come for the army law to be renewed. He was therefore determined that the forces now should be placed once for all on an impregnable footing, independent henceforth of the Reichstag. His compromise seven years earlier had solved a difficult problem for the time being, but had only postponed the final solution. It was unfortunate that this solution should have to be found at a time of acute economic distress, when in Silesia thousands were threatened with destitution and when trade was universally stagnant, but never for a moment did Bismarck hesitate in his conviction that the army must be maintained in full force.

The spirit of the time was one of depression indeed, and a humble correspondent only expressed the hopes of many of his countrymen when he begged Count Moltke to use his influence with the Emperor for the reduction of the army. Moltke's reply was largely quoted abroad, for indeed the whole "gunpowder and glory business" as Lord Derby called it, was not calculated to reassure a Europe already nervous of German designs in view of the agreement with Austria, which was the subject of rumour and apprehension.

"... Who does not share in the desire to see those heavy war taxes reduced which Germany has to bear, thanks to her geographical position in the midst of most powerful nations? It is neither princes nor governments who stand in the way of this reduction, a happier state of things can only arrive when all nations learn that every war, not excepting victorious wars, is a mutual misfortune. Even the power of an emperor cannot bring about this conviction.

A better religious and moral education of the people in all

<sup>1</sup>*Annual Register* 1880 p. 160.

countries is necessary to produce this feeling, neither you nor I will live to see this eventual product of civilization. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

In the Reichstag itself loud voices were raised in protest, but the Government set themselves to educate public opinion in favour of a bill which Bismarck held essential for the safety of the Empire.

"On the Western front of Russia," wrote the *Nord Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, "new fortifications are to be constructed, Kovno will be surrounded with detached forts and turned into a fortified camp.

It is also asserted that at Bialystock, and Grodno on the Petersburg-Warsaw railway defensive works are being prepared. An apprehension can hardly exist in Government circles of an attack by Germany on Russia; such extensive and expensive additions to fortifications are not, however, made without some object.

The most probable intention may be to give the Russian people the impression that an attack was to be feared on the part of Germany. Should this view be successfully propagated it is not a long way to arrive at a hostile feeling against the menacing neighbour. If it were true that the Russian plans against Germany, whose instigator, the Minister of War, General Milutin, is said to be, are only deferred till France is 'ready,' there may be seen in these fortifications the preparation of a sure basis for the future war of attack on Germany.

Napoleon I said, as is well known, that in fifty years Europe would become either republican or Cossack. The fifty years are indeed past, sixty even, but still it is remarkable that a judge like Napoleon I looked upon the French and Russians as the only two conquering peoples who, not satisfied with their own country, aspire to universal domination.

This view is certainly not without justifiable foundation when we look back at the history of both nations. Neither France nor Russia had ever to fear attacks from Germany. Russia suffered hers from the Swedes and Poles, but both these are no longer in a state to give her trouble; and France has never been the party attacked in her wars with Germany. The gigantic armaments of both countries which oppress the rest of Europe can only therefore be calculated on an aggressive policy. . . ."

<sup>1</sup>*Times*. 9 January 1880.



This article caused an alarming sensation in France, but Hohenlohe said of it: "Afterwards I learned at the Chancellor's that he had only written [it] to produce an effect on the Deputies, so that they might vote for the Army Bill. He laughed when I told him of the result."<sup>1</sup>

The Count de St. Vallier, just about to leave for Paris, informed Lord Odo Russell of his intention of speaking privately both to Radowitz and to Bismarck, if he were well enough to receive him, on the serious effects he anticipated from the passing of the bill.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Very Confidential. 30 January 1880.<sup>2</sup>—

"... The French Government, M. de St. Vallier says, can, of course, not object to the measure, but he is anxious in a friendly spirit to warn the German Government that the French Press, which has hitherto been very reserved on the subject, might easily be roused to retort if the measure is introduced into the German Parliament by speeches on the part of the military authorities liable to wound the susceptibilities of the people of France—such as were delivered by Field Marshal Moltke and others at the time of the discussions of the first Army Bill in 1873 and 1874.

M. de St. Vallier flatters himself that Prince Bismarck will appreciate his anxious desire to prevent an angry discussion in the Press of both countries which might interfere with the friendly relations now happily existing between France and Germany."

Bismarck, at great pains to reassure St. Vallier, spontaneously volunteered to explain. The proposed increase was little more than a bagatelle, and the importance of the bill really lay in the power it would bestow on the Government to dispose liberally of all its forces for the next seven years without the necessity of begging parliamentary subsidies. "In the present case," he said, "as often happens in the world the lesser surpasses the greater in attracting upon itself the attention of the great public which has the kindness to agitate itself over an increase of 26,000 men and a budgetary increase of 30,000,000 M. and forgets, thanks to this emotion, that in '73 when we obtained our

<sup>1</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 258.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 958. No. 53.

first seven years' law with so much trouble, that it swore loudly that the law would never be renewed. Ah, well, it will be renewed without difficulty and the opposition will spend itself on the effective increase, quite secondary in my eyes to the seven years' law."

In his anxiety to impress St. Vallier, Bismarck promised to deal with Moltke: "As for this blockhead (*tête de bois*) von Moltke you know nobody can get very much from him, but I will make an urgent appeal to his prudence: I will ask him to keep as far as possible to the purely technical and military aspects of the bill, and if he finds it necessary to touch on the point of foreign dangers, to turn his attention away from the Vosges and towards the Vistula."<sup>1</sup>

The press did not sing in unison with these soothing strains of the Chancellor, but St. Vallier was not unduly alarmed, understanding Bismarck as thoroughly as even Lord Odo Russell. He appreciated the real value to be placed on these indiscreet articles, and was reassured by Bismarck's promise that as soon as the law was passed they would be followed by conciliatory views, and by his statement that the state of public opinion in Germany made it necessary to act upon it in the House or through the press, but that he had undertaken not to raise the French spectre in the Chamber. "Newspaper articles that could always be disavowed or modified are less serious and significant than words pronounced in an assembly by ministers or members of the army."<sup>2</sup>

The French Ambassador's faith in Bismarck was not shared by his countrymen in Paris, and the tone of the Emperor's speech at the opening of the Reichstag was calculated to rouse his fears and to confirm theirs. ". . . The bases, too, on which the Imperial Military Law of 2 May 1874 has organized the German army require reformation and extension. Since the passing of that law such comprehensive innovations have been made in neighbouring states that the German Empire, without prejudicing in any way the peaceful tendency of its policy, is compelled, in the interest of its own security, to perfect its military arrangements. In view of the sacrifices already made by the German people it is with reluctance that the Federal

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* III. pp.19-23.

<sup>2</sup>*D.D.F.* III. p.32.

Governments contemplate this increase, yet His Majesty the Emperor and King has no doubt that the protection of the highest national blessings from all danger from without will be recognized with equal clearness and be demanded with equal determination by the whole German people as by the Federal Governments. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

In Paris the outlook was stormy. Lord Lyons reported that the warlike preparations of Germany were producing much uneasiness. Russell replied that this uneasiness was not confined to France.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Most Confidential. 20 February 1880.<sup>2</sup>—

" . . . Similar apprehensions in regard to French and Russian armaments prevailed also in Germany, but they have somewhat subsided since the publication of the new military law and the speech from the throne of the 12th inst. which the Press assures the public are unmistakable guarantees of peace.

The German military authorities appear satisfied that the French army will not gain in strength or in organization under the present system of the new French Government, whilst the ardent desire manifested publicly and privately by M. de Freycinet and M. Gambetta himself to establish the most intimate relations with Prince Bismarck is leading in Berlin to the hope that France may gradually be induced to join the Austro-German alliance, and that France in so doing will draw England after her into the Peace League offered to the Powers by the German Emperor in the speech from the throne on the 12th inst.

Prince Bismarck in private conversation with a friend of mine said: 'After the war of 1870 and the formation of the German Empire I thought that an alliance with England would lead to our reconciliation with France, but practically I have found that England subordinates her foreign policy to her alliance with France, so that by securing the co-operation of France in the first instance, Germany will acquire the moral support of England through France at the same time.'

In regard to Russia Prince Bismarck said that her attitude would remain open to suspicion and would require careful watching until she reduced her armaments and withdrew her troops from the frontier.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 958. No. 81. To Lord Salisbury. 14 February 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 958. No. 83.

The country to which Prince Bismarck has taken a greater aversion than heretofore is Italy.

He believes Italy to be bent on territorial aggrandizement and willing to co-operate to that end with Russia against Austria, as she did with Prussia in 1866. He is surprised that Austria does not resent more openly the attitude assumed by Italy, and disappointed that Baron Haymerle does not share his suspicious alarms and warns Italy that Austria will not be trifled with in the future.

He urges the Austrian Government to strengthen the defences of her Italian frontiers and to be prepared to resist an invasion which he believes the Italian Government will have neither the prudence nor the strength to prevent. . . .”

The bill was debated on 3 March 1880. The case for the Government was put by General von Kamecke, as illness prevented Bismarck from taking part in the discussion. He reminded the House that the duty of watching the growth and increase of foreign armaments lay with his department—the War Office—and assured them that the action of Germany’s neighbours had disturbed the balance of power during the past few years. This disturbance must affect Germany, who could not let herself be outdone, and therefore, although there was no immediate political necessity for the law, military administration alone could give confidence and security. He demanded, then, unanimous support for a measure based on long-standing consideration for the more perfect defence of the Fatherland. It was only respect for the existing law that had prevented these proposals from being made before, and they had been forced upon the Government. These proposals provided for an additional 10,000 recruits yearly, but, so that agriculture might not be unduly interfered with, there would be no increase in the length of service.

These arguments failed to impress the Liberals. Richter complained that the House was kept in the dark with regard to foreign policy, and scoffed at the black picture painted by the War Minister. Russia, hardly strong enough to overthrow the “Sick Man,” need not make Germany appear weaker than she really was. The new law meant heavier burdens on agriculture at a time when Germany’s favourable military position and invulnerability by sea made the law unnecessary. The

Government's figures were manipulated, and he gave his own—

Weakest German Battalion ..	..	590
Strongest French Battalion ..	..	330
Strongest Russian Battalion ..	..	490

Two years' military discipline was beneficial—longer was demoralizing. The French menace he curtly dismissed: "Can it be expected that schools where 8,477 teachers were wanted and every French teacher had 120 boys to teach should be considered as equal to military preparatory establishments?"

Moltke replied. All governments would keep the peace as long as they were strong; weak governments were a misfortune to their country and a danger to their neighbours. All Germany's frontiers must be guarded. Since 1871 France had redoubled her peace army. She had now 497,000 men, and Russia 800,000 against Germany's 401,000. Germany had only become a nation through long-continued hard work, her credit depended upon her security. Her wars had always been defensive—the fate of a nation lay in its strength alone.

Other speakers emphasized the lesson of the Turkish war. It showed that Russia was neither a powerful friend nor a dangerous foe. More than one deputy spoke approvingly of the Austrian alliance, and Bennigsen praised it saying, "The Chancellor had for the first time acted in the interest of all parties." Windthorst said the alliance was necessary as Russia and France were allied.<sup>1</sup>

For two months the debate continued, but the Opposition fought in vain. Even the change of government in England was exploited in favour of the bill. Deputy Dernburg's<sup>2</sup> speech ran, ". . . In England, whose policy had hitherto inclined towards Germany and Austria, a man of extraordinary power and eloquence had caused at any rate a change of government,"<sup>3</sup> . . . and Bismarck declaimed: "Every country is menaced by hostile parties who give themselves warlike airs to flatter the chauvinistic sentiments of a portion of the people . . . in England it is the Manchester school, who, if returned to power

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 98. To Lord Salisbury. (Enclosure) 3 March 1880.

<sup>2</sup>Editor of *National Zeitung*.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 168. To Lord Salisbury. 17 April 1880.

with the visionary Gladstone and the feeble Hartington will blow the fire on Europe to put out the conflagration or to promote the trade of John Bull."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of April the bill had become law. The German Government had henceforth complete control over the most perfect war machine the world had ever known.

### III

Bismarck once called Lasker, the leader of the left wing of the Liberal party, the "disease" of Germany, but he regarded Social-Democracy as a malignant growth that could only be dealt with by drastic surgical operation. He thought he saw his way clearer to perform the necessary operation when the attempted murder of the Emperor, in June 1878, following so closely on a similar attempt in May, gave him his opportunity to take advantage both of the Emperor's natural horror,<sup>2</sup> and of the outraged feeling of public opinion. "Now I have them," he exclaimed, even before expressing any sympathy for his master.

Bismarck's first step was to place Berlin, Charlottenberg and Potsdam "in a minor state of siege." All forms of free discussion, even in the Reichstag and Landtag, were sternly discouraged. The deputies were urged to recollect "in what circles their speeches were read, and the effect they produced. Speeches in favour of Social-Democracy were read by the most uneducated classes, who were embittered by distress and dazzled by hopes which could never be realized."<sup>3</sup> The carrying of fire-arms and explosives was absolutely prohibited except to soldiers or sailors or those possessing game licences, and the

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* III. 73.

<sup>2</sup>*F.O.* 64. 962. No. 479. Hödel, the first assailant, was beheaded in the prison-yard in Berlin, the first execution in Prussia since 1866. The Emperor had the strongest possible aversion to the death penalty. As Lord Odo pointed out later: "His Imperial Majesty has so strong an objection to signing death warrants that, notwithstanding his stern sense of duty it would be almost impossible to obtain his signature for such a purpose; and this circumstance has become so well known that in passing sentence of death no judge would now feel that he was doing more than recording it, and that it would be commuted to one of penal servitude for life, or perhaps to one of even less severity." To Lord Granville. 16 October 1880.

<sup>3</sup>*F.O.* 64. 932. No. 157. M. Nicolson's précis. 8 March 1879.

discretionary power of the police was extended to the banishment of "all persons considered dangerous to the public security or order." The play *Marie Antoinette* was censored and public alarm was stimulated by semi-official announcements that Berlin was a great centre of subversive socialistic discontent.

The Emperor's speech at the opening of the Reichstag contemplated an extension of the campaign. The measures hitherto taken expired on 31 March 1881, but they were to be prolonged further. "The measures taken in execution of this law have succeeded in keeping those revolutionary efforts within certain bounds," said he, "but have failed to prevent them hitherto in a complete manner. Nor can they be expected to do so within the space of one year. You will therefore be asked to decree the application of the law for a further suitable period."<sup>1</sup>

There were Germans to whom Social-Democracy bore a very different aspect, and who were prepared to indict the whole policy of the Government. In a fiery tirade Richter accused them of "forcing the people to pay taxes, become soldiers and hold their tongues," and he prophesied disastrous results from such a policy.<sup>2</sup> The Reichstag, not entirely without apprehension with regard to their own future, did indeed pass the Anti-Social-Democratic Bill, but a Parliamentary Obstruction Bill did not get through, and was referred to a commission.<sup>3</sup>

Bismarck was extremely dissatisfied with the progress made by the end of the session—only the Social Bill and the Army Bill passed—and his anger and impatience were expressed in strong terms. He regretted "the party spirit which had sprung up, which he was glad to have again an opportunity of denouncing, and which he should continue to denounce even if he no longer occupied his present position. He described the Centre as the bitterest opponents of the Government, for six months they had opposed every measure: to them must be added the Progressists and Free Traders. Last year the Centre had appeared anxious to concede, and he had accordingly negotiated with the Holy See, but their present attitude told him what to expect from Rome. He warned these opponents not to sow

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 958. No. 81. To Lord Salisbury. 14 February 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 958. No. 85. Précis. 21 February 1880.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 958. No. 91. To Lord Salisbury. 25 February 1880.

discord among the Governments . . . for thirty years he had fought for German unity: he had met with hatred and opposition on all sides: the Emperor's wishes alone had induced him to retain his office, but he was weary to death, when he retired he should advise His Majesty to choose a cabinet that would as much as possible meet the views of the Centre and Conservatives.<sup>1</sup>

The murder of Tsar Alexander II in March 1881 made the most profound impression throughout Germany. The Centre were as alive as Bismarck to the great danger of the spread of subversive doctrines, and Windthorst proposed in the Reichstag that an international agreement to punish regicides was desirable in the interests of public safety, at about the same time as a suggestion was being made elsewhere that a conference should be held at Brussels to combat the growing menace of Nihilism. The British Government had no intention of participating in such a conference, and after Lord Granville's views on the subject had been expressed in a long despatch to Lord Ampthill (who had just received his long-merited peerage)<sup>2</sup> the project was abandoned.

The Reichstag elections at the end of October 1881 revealed strong opposition to the new economic and financial policy. The official press had failed to arouse the country with the cry, "For or against Bismarck," but "it would, however," said Lord Ampthill, "be premature to assume that Prince Bismarck will have to abandon the measures he has hitherto failed to persuade the Reichstag to sanction. With skilful management he may yet find means of organizing a working majority in the coming Reichstag. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

Bismarck outlined his policy for the coming session to an unsympathetic House. He foreshadowed biennial budgets, workmen's insurance, a tobacco monopoly and increased liquor duties. In foreign affairs alone was the outlook reassuring, "At no time within the last ten years could equal confidence be placed in the prospect of continued peace," for the Emperor's message conveyed a solemn warning that internal conditions were not happy. "As the rejection of the Government measures will lead to another dissolution of Parliament, and a renewed

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 960. No. 210. To Lord Granville. 15 May 1880.

<sup>2</sup>See p. 299.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 984. No. 429. To Lord Granville. 5 November 1881.



appeal to the electors," wrote Lord Ampthill, "a serious conflict between the Crown and the country is probably looming in the distance."<sup>1</sup>

Backed by the Emperor, and determined to carry through his measures, Bismarck took steps to create a Government majority. An imperial rescript was issued on 4 January pointing out that the Sovereign was the leader of the political party in power, and that opposition was not expected. The papers talked about impending constitutional crises, but officially it was regarded as a mere enunciation of the Prussian constitution. Lord Ampthill shared this view, and communicated it to his Government.<sup>2</sup> Bismarck himself said that the manifesto was issued "to correct an apparently growing idea that the King of Prussia rules in the sense of the French word 'régner,' and not of the word 'gouverner,' a difference, which, according to Prussian traditions, does not exist." The King's right to maintain a large army was justified by many examples, ". . . he had stood by the side of the King, but ready to incur any responsibility, although he at one time feared to become the Strafford or Polignac of his country."<sup>3</sup> This strong stand impressed many of the deputies, but did not move the Social Democrats, who continued to call attention to the tyrannical working of the Social Law with its numerous expulsions from Berlin, and who protested loudly at the use of secret funds to suborn the semi-official press.<sup>4</sup>

The struggle over the question of the duration of Parliament and the adoption of biennial budgets began when the Bundesrat (whose duty it was to prepare the budget) presented simultaneous estimates for 1883-4 and 1884-5 on the ground that there was nothing in the constitution to prevent such a procedure, but the Reichstag countered this manœuvre by declining to deal with the later estimates,<sup>5</sup> and Bismarck's hope of raising revenue by a tobacco monopoly was dashed by the rejection of the bill by a majority of 277 to 43.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 984. No. 440. To Lord Granville. 17 November 1881.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 12. 13 January 1882.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 29. To Lord Granville. 31 January 1882.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 58. 25 February 1882.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 1024. No. 21. 13 January 1883.

<sup>6</sup>*Wahl: Deutsche Geschichte* II. 136. The Sick Insurance Bill was passed in June 1883, but at this time Lord Ampthill being in England, he makes no comment.

Meanwhile the bitterness of the Social-Democrats was increasing, as the Socialist Laws came up again for renewal. "The Socialist Laws," declaimed Liebknecht early in 1883, "had only embittered the working classes by a system of 'espionage' worse than even in Russia. Any 'attentats' that ensued must be laid to the charge of the founders of this law. His party did not desire a violent overthrow of government, but such would occur unless real social reforms were carried out."<sup>1</sup> He might as well have kept silent. The Government was as adamant about the laws as about the "minor state of siege," and a year later his party was singled out by the Emperor for a bitter attack. At a reception held by the president of the Bundesrat and Reichstag and Members of the Chambers of Deputies on 22 March 1884, he said:

"... He was not pleased with the present negotiations of the Reichstag. He could not understand how the proposal to postpone the law concerning Socialists after the grounds which his ministers had brought forward in support of it, could meet with so much opposition, and must needs be sent back to a commission. They seemed to have forgotten the circumstances out of which the necessity to decree such a law had arisen.

He had been obliged to shed his blood first, before it became clear what dangers they were going to meet, and consequently the opposition against the law was directed against himself personally.

It was a mistake to suppose that, just because the movement was not any longer so visible outwardly, that the law could be spared. He, who held the threads, was in a position to judge in the matter. The gentlemen who throw difficulties in the way of the postponement of the law, should not forget that we have reached a turning-point in political life, and that it behoves them to avoid the path which leads to the fall of the Monarchy. The position of the new coalition in the Reichstag which was now opposed to his Government, was very suspicious. He spoke out freely so as to leave no doubt as to his beneficent views in favour of the working-classes, and he hoped that every one heard him, and that gentlemen present would act in the sense of his instructions.

Turning to the members of the Bundesrath the Emperor said: 'Of you gentlemen I feel sure, to my great satisfaction.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1024. No. 22. To Lord Granville. 13 January 1883.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1049. No. 83. To Lord Granville. 31 March 1884.

The struggle for the Socialist Bill was an index of the two currents of thought in Germany, and its fate was uncertain to the very last, but the Germany of the 'eighties was the Germany that Bismarck had created, and by the final passing of the Bill on 17 May 1884 the anti-socialist legislation was prolonged till 30 September 1886. It was under prescription and persecution that Social-Democracy grew up in Germany, and while it was thus developing underground, the Government was being reorganized on ever more conservative lines. The Imperial Rescript had only been the forerunner of other changes. In April 1884 Bismarck requested to be relieved of the duties connected with the Prussian Ministry so that he might devote himself to the affairs of the Empire alone, almost at the same time suggesting a revival of the Prussian *Staatsrat*.

*To Lord Granville.* 3 April 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... What does not appear to be known yet, is that Bismarck is also in favour of the re-establishment of the Prussian *Staatsrat*, or Privy Council, which existed before the year 1848, and which, although not summoned by the Sovereign since that date, has never been abolished, and could therefore legally be summoned at the king's pleasure and at any time.

The *Staatsrat* has only a consultative voice, and its deliberations are attended, as in Russia, by the heir to the throne and by royal princes appointed privy councillors by the Crown.

The revival of the *Staatsrat* or Privy Council would not only be an advantage, but also a popular measure in Prussia."

On 19 June the *Staatsrat* was once more revived, and became an integral part of the already complicated Prussian constitution.

#### IV

"*Nach Kanossa gehen wir nicht*," said Bismarck, but the stars in their courses were fighting against him, and in the end he had no choice but to go. When he founded the German Empire even he had much to learn, and one lesson that was gradually borne in upon him through the hard logic of events was that there were even greater dangers to German unity than

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1050. No. 89.

that of ultramontaniam, and that these dangers could only be met with the co-operation of those he had persecuted at first.

No peace would have been possible with Pius IX, but he died in 1878, and was succeeded by a much more diplomatic Pope, Leo XIII, who very early in his pontificate made it clear that a *modus vivendi* would have his full approval and support. An exchange of friendly letters between the new Pope and the Emperor was among the first signs of a healthier state of affairs, and the papal encyclical, though maintaining all the papal claims intact, was conciliatory in tone. A further letter from the Pope, however, hinting at the desirability of a modification of the May Laws, deeply offended Bismarck, who said the question rather was what steps the Church intended to take, and who bitterly resented an allusion to the alteration of the constitution.

A further exchange of friendly letters took place between the Pope and the Crown Prince after the attempted assassination of the Emperor, but Bismarck, although quite pleased to make an appointment to meet Cardinal Masala at Kissingen to discuss the situation, still thought that the chief difficulty in the way of peace was the fact that Germany had more to offer to the Church than the Church to the State. At this stage, judging from his memorandum to Falk, he did not realize how necessary the Centre was to become<sup>1</sup> to him if his new economic and social policy was to triumph over the determined opposition it had aroused among the National Liberals and Social-Democrats.

As the months passed this became more and more obvious, and concessions that had only angered the Chancellor when first suggested now began to appear less impossible. The new Pope was sincerely anxious for peace, and since a repeal of the May Laws seemed out of the question, at first he contented himself with writing a letter to Archbishop Melchers of Cologne, hoping that they would now be administered with moderation. Even a concession like this meant a change of policy which was not forthcoming at the moment, and could hardly be carried into practice while Falk remained in office. But Bismarck's change of policy in other ways was extremely distasteful to the Minister, and he resigned in July 1879, carrying with him into retirement a strong feeling of disgruntled bitterness.

The Pope concentrated for the time being on the question

<sup>1</sup>Foerster: *Adalbert Falk*. pp.533-6.

of the bishops' assistants and their appointment. On 24 February 1880 in another letter to Archbishop Melchers, he conceded the principle suggested in previous correspondence with the Crown Prince that Prussia might be put on an equal footing with other nations on this matter—the names of such priests being submitted to the approval of the Prussian Government. The *Post* welcomed this advance as a first great step towards reconciliation, acknowledged the difficulties that Leo XIII had had to face, contrasted his statesmanlike attitude with that of the extreme ultramontanes, and hinted that the result of this concession would be some modification of the May Laws. *Germania* expressed the view that the initiative now lay with the Prussian Government, and most of the other leading journals assumed that they would not fail to respond. "The universal satisfaction which manifests itself in the German Press," commented Lord Ampthill, "at the prospect of the establishment of peace between the Pope and the Emperor, shows that public opinion had grown weary of the war which has now lasted nearly seven years between Church and State, but which is not yet quite over since the Pope's concession has only been enunciated in a pastoral, and has not yet been confirmed by direct negotiations between Berlin and Rome."<sup>1</sup>

The Prussian Government did not, in fact, rebuff the Papal advance. The *Nord Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was inspired to publish an article on 12 April containing something more than a hint that as soon as proof was forthcoming that the personal intentions of the Pope would find practical expression, Prussia would grant greater liberty in the application of the May Laws, and by modifying them in favour of the Church, show that the State was not unprepared to make concessions. It was said that views to this effect had already been submitted to Cardinal Jacobini, the Papal Pro-Nuncio at Venice.<sup>2</sup> This promise was fulfilled by a modifying bill which was introduced into the Landtag at the end of May, a bill that did not have an easy passage. A coalition of Ultramontanes, Progressists and National Liberals blocked it in committee. "The National Liberals," exclaimed Bismarck's organ, the *Nord Deutsche*, "had made it their boast that they had always supported the Chancellor

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 127. To Lord Salisbury. 18 March 1880.

<sup>2</sup>N.D.A.Z. 12 June 1880.

in his great political schemes, and had now failed him when he asked for power to come to amiable terms with the Papal See,"<sup>1</sup> but nevertheless within six weeks the bill had passed both Houses.

The next important step was the mission of Baron von Schlözer to Rome which re-established the official diplomatic relations so unhappily interrupted for years; the mission proved successful, and he himself was appointed to the now necessary post of envoy. Great secrecy was observed with regard to his activities, but the results were soon patent. At the end of 1883 the poor old blinded Dr. Blum was reinstated to the See of Limburg, of which he had been deprived since 1877, and a mutual exchange of visits took place between the Crown Prince and the Pope on the one hand, and Cardinal Hohenlohe and Dr. Döllinger on the other. Hohenlohe also visited the Italian Ambassador in Berlin.

*To Lord Granville.* Confidential. 28 December 1883.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Both the Cardinal and the Ambassador explain the visit by the simple fact that they have been friends since early youth, and have called upon each other before in less stirring times, without giving offence to public opinion, but the Berlin press will take no heed of an explanation which would cut short the flow of their most sensational allusions and of their critical witticisms about the 'Crown Prince's sudden flight to Canossa and Cardinal Hohenlohe's gradual pilgrimage towards Eisleben'. . . ."

The tide of peace now happily began to flow rapidly. Concession upon concession was made to the Church. State stipends to the Roman Catholic bishops were restored in all dioceses except those of Cologne, Posen and Münster.

*To Lord Granville.* 4 January 1884.<sup>3</sup>—

"... This measure is a large concession to the demands of the Centre Party, and will doubtless give very general satisfaction to the Catholics of the districts affected thereby.

The only dioceses in which the payment of the ecclesiastical stipends is still suspended are Cologne, Posen and Münster, the

<sup>1</sup>12 June 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1027. No. 368.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 1049. No. 5.

bishops of these Sees having been deposed by the Government, they are still regarded as vacant. . . .”

On 21 January 1884 Bishop Brinckmann, who had been deprived of his bishopric of Münster since March 1876, received a pardon by royal ordinance, but the Government could not as yet bring themselves to reinstate the Archbishops of Posen and Cologne. The matter was discussed in the Landtag, when Windthorst challenged the Government to give a reason for this discrimination. No definite reply was forthcoming, and he had to be content with the cold statement that “the House must be satisfied with the repeated declarations of the Government that they did not consider their reinstatement conducive to the public peace.” But within three short months this concession too was made, and an announcement appeared that the suspended State endowments would be restored as from 1 January. Meanwhile a motion for a grant from Catholic funds to an “Old Catholic” bishopric was negatived “on the grounds that this sect no longer formed part of the Catholic Church.”

This was the state of affairs when Lord Ampthill died in August. Bismarck had not yet quite arrived at Canossa, but his journey was nearly over.

# THE WORKING OUT OF THE TREATY [1878-1881]

*The European Concert is the first real attempt in modern times to arrive at such an understanding between the six great Powers as might gradually become a basis for political disarmament and for the adoption of a policy which would cease to ruin nations in time of peace by perpetual preparations for war.*

—DILKE.

*Boundary Problems of Greece and Montenegro.*—Reasons for delay—provisions of the Treaty with regard to Greece—Lord Odo Russell's summary of the situation for the benefit of Lord Granville in April 1880—dangers of further delay—the Ambassadors' conference.

*Coercion under Difficulties.*—Prevarication of the Porte—Dulcigno demonstration—threatened bombardment of Smyrna—Lord Odo Russell's views on British policy—surrender of Dulcigno—dragging on of Greek negotiations—the question settled.

*Roumania.*—Bismarck's annoyance with Roumania—the Jewish question—Bleichröder and the railways—independence recognized.

## I

"A line marked out by a number of elderly gentlemen at a congress was scarcely likely to be literally available as a boundary for two hostile states."

SO wrote the *Times* in a mood of pardonable cynicism on 11 December 1879 when the negotiations over the Greek and Montenegrin frontiers seemed to be hanging on permanently. Indeed, so long-drawn-out were they, and so tedious, that the task of unravelling their tortuous folds can only be undertaken with profit because of the light they throw on the differences between a treaty on paper and a treaty in fact.



Nine months after the Congress, and at a moment when there was no immediate prospect of a settlement, Lord Salisbury seemed to find no embarrassment in saying to a somewhat sceptical House of Lords, "the settlement was not unduly prolonged. . . . Advice is one thing," he proceeded, "but 'resolute guidance' smacks of salt-petre." And Beaconsfield also had no hesitation in asserting bluntly that "Greece has at no time treated the recommendatory intimations in the Treaty of Berlin as at all binding on the signatories." These statements, taken together, seem to mean that the Government had no particular policy with regard to the question so it was no matter for surprise that the weary months dragged by with nothing done—and all the while the unfortunate populations, the pawns in this unhappy game, lived from day to day in an atmosphere of suspense and uncertainty. A conference was, indeed, suggested only to be abandoned, a French proposal made in December 1879 fell on equally barren ground, and it was only in March 1880 that the British Government in agreement with the French decided that it was time to bring Article XXIV of the Treaty into operation. Lord Odo Russell was then instructed to communicate a formal proposal to the German Government:

"A boundary Commission comprised of commissioners nominated by the Signatory Powers shall study and determine on the spot the best line suited to form a new frontier between Turkey and Greece. They shall take for basis of their deliberations the XIIIth Protocol of the Treaty of Berlin and without being bound by the general geographical indications given therein, they shall loyally act in the spirit and conform themselves to the policy described by the Plenipotentiaries at that sitting of the Congress. They shall decide by a majority of votes upon the precise frontier best fitted to carry that policy into effect and H.M.G. will join in recommending the disputant Powers the frontier which the Commission shall in this manner determine."<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck received this proposal with the discouraging intimation that Turkey had already rejected it, and with a desire to know what England now intended to do. He thought himself that Turkey's action excluded her by the terms of Article XXIV from representation on the Commission.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 103. To Lord Salisbury. 4 March 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 120. To Lord Salisbury. Confidential. 11 March 1880.

At this moment the Liberals came into power, and Lord Odo summed up the position for Lord Granville's benefit:

*To Lord Granville.* Confidential. 29 April 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

"... The still pending questions in the East are those connected with the Montenegrin frontier, the Turco-Greek frontier, the Rumanian frontier at Arab-Tabia, the Servian Agrarian Law question, and the question of sending the German commissioner back to Eastern Roumelia.

In regard to the Montenegrin frontier question the German Ambassador has been instructed to support Her Majesty's Ambassador and the Austrian representative at Constantinople.

If any serious difference of opinion should arise, which is unlikely, Prince Bismarck would certainly support the wishes of his ally, Austria, as the nearest neighbour to Montenegro, and would probably not object to Austrian interference if the Porte should fail to carry out the convention of the 18th inst. and prove unable to establish order in the disputed districts.

Although Prince Bismarck declared himself ready to adopt the proposals of H.M.G. in regard to the rectification of the Turco-Greek frontier, his sympathies have all along been with the French proposal for the largest concession possible to Greece. Any further proposal on which the Governments of England and France may hereafter agree will be sure to have the support of Germany, where the desire to contribute to the development of Greece is genuine and general. . . ."

Meanwhile the Albanians had profited by the delay in carrying out the Treaty to invade the border districts, where the Porte at last reluctantly agreed to cede a strip of land to Montenegro. But the Albanians quickly occupied it, and Turkey was called upon to drive them out. It was far from certain whether she would be able or willing to do so, and the early days of May were spent in discussions and proposals.<sup>2</sup> Hohenlohe, as yet inexperienced in the work of the Foreign Office, maintained a studied reserve, and it was only from private sources that Lord Odo Russell heard that the German Government held the view that outside assistance would be necessary if Turkey were to carry out her treaty obligations, and that so long as Austria would

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 187.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 960. Nos. 191 and 193. To Lord Granville. 2 and 6 May 1880.

neither help herself nor permit any other Power to do so, Bismarck was in favour of "letting the Albanian movement take its course unmolested by foreign intervention, but if Austria changed her policy he would raise no objection to intervention even if the proposed assistance were undertaken by Italy."<sup>1</sup> Britain and Russia favoured an identic note, but relinquished the idea in deference to the French proposal of a conference of ambassadors to take place at Berlin instead.<sup>2</sup>

This was the situation. The new British Government wanted to see the questions settled. Bismarck, allied to Austria, was prepared to support her interests, and was apprehensive of any settlement enhancing the power of Russia. France was anxious to consult Germany in everything, and Turkey was clever enough to play off all these interests against one another. So the beginning of June passed in preparations for the conference, while Bismarck, wanting France to enjoy all the national satisfaction possible out of her Greek policy, was gratified by Lord Granville's assent to his request that she might take the initiative in proposing the new Greek frontier.<sup>3</sup>

Bismarck was not the president, his health not being good enough at this time for the additional fatigue, and he was represented by Prince Hohenlohe. The sittings, held in the Foreign Office, were governed by the same procedure as in 1878. Bismarck's views on the question were bluntly expressed to the French Ambassador: "M. de St. Vallier knows my opinions of the East and Orientals too well to believe that I have the least Phil-Hellene enthusiasm; on the contrary, the Greeks are quite as indifferent to me as the Turks or the Bulgarians, and I profess the same contempt for all the races of the Levant, Moslims or Christians. My sole motive is, as I have already said to him and I beg of you to repeat it to him, to be faithful to the promises I have made to France, to prove to him my goodwill, to support his views: in this matter, then, it is French policy which determines mine. . . ."<sup>4</sup> Lord Odo Russell, on the other hand, favoured Greece, and hoped his instructions would permit him to act with France on that

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 960. No. 201. To Lord Granville. Secret. 12 May 1880.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* Nos. 219 and 226. 21 and 24 May 1880.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 960. No. 256. Private and confidential. 9 June 1880.

<sup>4</sup>D.D.F. III. 143-4. To Freycinet. 12 June 1880.

account, but he found the military delegate, Linton Simmons, was an ardent Turcophil.<sup>1</sup>

The conference approved of the French line, and it was accepted on 25 June,<sup>2</sup> and poor Sadoullah's protest to Hohenlohe only brought forth a warning that refusal to comply might mean a Russian expedition of 20,000 men, and a possibility of others to follow. "Sadoullah, much moved, asked if Germany would be among them. 'I need not explain further,' replied the Prince, thus absolving himself from the necessity of admitting that the threat was merely a *Ballon d'essai* of Lobanoff's."<sup>3</sup> The conference decided that the new boundary should run north of Kalamas to the vicinity of Han Kalibaki, along the mountain ridges between the river basins, from Mount Olympus to the Ægean Sea, leaving the Mavroneri on the north, and the Kalamas, the Arta, the Aspropotamus and the Salamyaia with the lake of Janina and its tributaries and Metzovo on the south. This complicated decision being unanimous, the conference ended on 1 July. The decision had yet to be translated into practice.

## II

On 10 July Lord Granville suggested coercive measures with regard to Montenegro. It took the form of a three weeks' ultimatum, at the expiry of which time, if the Porte was still unable to carry out her agreement, the Powers would expect her "to join them in assisting the Prince of Montenegro to take possession by force of the Dulcigno district under the alternative plan." Lord Odo Russell found Bismarck at first unwilling to take any responsibility for the naval demonstration which must be a consequence of such an ultimatum, though he would not go so far as to reject the proposal altogether.<sup>4</sup> Two days later he was in a rather more accommodating frame of mind and agreed to take part if the Powers were unanimous.

The immediate problem was the presentation of the collective note. Bismarck thought the award of the conference and of the

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* 154.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* 156.

<sup>3</sup>*D.D.F.* III. 169.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 291. To Lord Granville. 8 July 1880.

Note should be presented simultaneously at Athens and Constantinople.<sup>1</sup> But now France began to recede, to the great surprise of Lord Odo Russell, who had in mind the menacing language held at Constantinople on at least two recent occasions. He thought it would be interesting to know if Prince Hohenlohe, from his great experience of the French, could explain the mystery of their present attitude of opposition to the European Concert.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 15 July 1880.<sup>2</sup>—

“... Prince Hohenlohe replied with a smile that nearly all Frenchmen, with very few exceptions, such for instance as our French colleague, count de St. Vallier, who knew better, suffered from what he called ‘a blue fright’ of being dragged by events into demonstrations which might ultimately entail the employment of French troops abroad, and which Prince Bismarck would then take advantage of, to pounce upon France for purposes of his own.

Absurd as this impression might appear to be, it was nevertheless shared by ‘serious men’ in France, who also thought that in such a contingency they could not reckon on any material assistance from England.

By holding menacing language to Turkey French ministers hoped to bring about a pacific solution of the Greek question and by refusing to join in the Montenegrin Naval demonstration they thought to be prudently keeping out of future dangerous entanglements.”

This was Hohenlohe’s view, but from other colleagues Lord Odo gathered a different impression. According to them it appeared the French Government regarded the “proposed naval Dulcigno demonstration as an impotent measure, which will not prevent hostilities being carried on inland, while the allied navies are cruising off the coast.”<sup>3</sup>

The French Government’s hesitation, however caused, manifested itself in a request for a joint assurance from Britain and Germany in very specific terms:

1st. “That the participation of *all* the Powers being acquired,

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 300. To Lord Granville. 10 July 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 307.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 316. Secret. 19 July 1880.

the German Government are ready to take part 'by showing their flag' in a naval demonstration, having for its object to facilitate the delimitation of the Montenegrin frontier as proposed by Her Majesty's Government.

and

2nd. "That the German Government are likewise disposed, if all the Powers are agreed, to declare that the mode of proceeding accepted in regard to Montenegro, might also be applied to the regulation of the Greek frontier question."<sup>1</sup>

Hohenlohe had no sooner given a satisfactory assent than Austria butted in with modifications. Germany, following her usual policy, was ready to agree to them "if all the Powers agreed," and was even prepared to despatch a man-of-war at once to the Mediterranean. Lord Odo Russell was told confidentially by Prince Hohenlohe that the frigate *Victoria*, at the moment at Plymouth, would probably be selected.<sup>2</sup>

The scene now changed to Constantinople, where the ambassadors were informed in confidence that "if they would simply declare in a collective note that the last Turkish proposal respecting Montenegro was not acceptable, the Porte would at once reply by agreeing to the Dulcigno proposal and would take measures accordingly."<sup>3</sup> The British Government, eyeing this gift horse with a considerable suspicion, saw no reason to abandon the idea of a collective note, "to which the Powers had already given their consent, and which only contemplated a naval demonstration at Dulcigno in the event of the Porte declaring its continued adherence to the April convention and not carrying it out in three weeks,"<sup>4</sup> and therefore instructed Mr. Goschen "to concert and agree with his colleagues as to the precise conditions of the mode of transfer by the Turks of the territory to be ceded to Montenegro, so that the civil authorities and military force should not retire from the positions to be ceded until those of the Montenegrins are on the spot to replace them." Prince Hohenlohe promised to send similar

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 322. To Lord Granville. 22 July 1880. As Lord Odo Russell said: *Montrer le pavillon, mais pas de grenadier pomméraniens*. Radowitz: Aufzeichnungen. Errinerungen II. 144.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 328. Confidential. 24 July 1880.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 339. 31 July 1880.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 354. To Lord Odo Russell. 1 August 1880.

instructions to Count Hatzfeldt at once, and also agreed to the idea of asking the French Government to draft the reply to the Porte's note respecting the Greek frontier.<sup>1</sup>

Here the diplomatic net became hopelessly entangled. On this very day, Prince Hohenlohe asked an amazed Lord Odo Russell incidentally what he thought of Mr. Goschen's new proposal regarding the new Greek frontier.

"I replied," reported the Ambassador, "that I was not acquainted with it."

Then followed an interesting discussion on the supposed suggestion, which, according to Prince Hohenlohe, was that Mr. Goschen, inclining towards the Turkish view of the Berlin award, had recommended H.M.G. to reconsider it and compromise with Turkey by allowing her to retain Janina.

Lord Odo, far from being impressed with this solution, thought it would merely encourage Turkey in her old game of resistance to reform, and although Hohenlohe said he agreed, he understood nevertheless that Mr. Goschen's proposal was not only supported by Count Corti, but most likely would be accepted by France and Austria as well, so anxious were they to avoid the use of force, arguments which did not shake Lord Odo Russell's misgivings in the slightest. Hohenlohe then spoke of the drawing back of France, and the timid policy she was now pursuing—and asked his colleague point blank whether, in the event of France backing out of the European Concert altogether, he thought H.M.G. would care to proceed alone. Lord Odo expressed "his firm conviction that they would continue to act with Germany, Austria, Italy and Russia in the great work of reform they had undertaken in Eastern Europe," and when Hohenlohe insinuated that H.M.G., even if certain of Russia, could not be sure of Austria and Italy's support, the Ambassador replied "that if England continued steadily to carry out her Eastern policy with Russia, Austria could not possibly become neutral like France and merely look on while Turkey was being reformed and saved from internal collapse. Italy was only too happy to play the part of a great power in company with England and Russia, and to share their influence in the East, and I thought His Highness would agree with me in thinking that Germany was too great a Power to withhold

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 348. To Lord Granville. 6 August 1880.

her moral support from the combined efforts of England, Russia, Austria and Italy to carry out the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin. It would then be seen whether France could afford to remain long out in the cold, and allow her influence in the East to be superseded by that of the rest of Europe."

Prince Hohenlohe brought him back to earth by reminding him of the notorious reluctance of public opinion in England to sanction the use of force, which was well-known and exploited by Turkey, so that her prolonged resistance might easily break up the European Concert, which would not go to the length of making war on Turkey for Greece. He believed Turkey was only accommodating with regard to Montenegro in order to resist the pressure with regard to Greece the more easily. But all these serious considerations only made the Ambassador believe in a united front the more firmly.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact the entire conversation was based on a misapprehension—No such declaration about Janina had ever been vouchsafed by Mr. Goschen, and Count Hatzfeldt, for his part, denied making any statement that could possibly be so construed, so that a lame explanation was all that Hohenlohe could offer. He said that Count Hatzfeldt had telegraphed that he and his colleagues, agreeing that, if Janina were left to Greece, a peaceful settlement would be less likely than if it were left to Turkey, Mr. Goschen had communicated this opinion to his Government, and the Russian Ambassador had also reported that Mr. Goschen appeared to be in agreement with it. As at the same time, Hohenlohe said, he had been in communication with Sadoullah Bey on the subject of Janina, he had somehow fathered the proposal on Mr. Goschen.<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to decide just how far the mistake was *bona fide* and how far Hohenlohe used it as a lever to extract Lord Odo Russell's views, but all the time that this perfectly unnecessary muddle was being straightened out Goschen, so far from making gratuitous and futile suggestions of his own, was directing all his energies towards driving home the British policy of a united front in insisting on the Berlin award. He proposed that Count Hatzfeldt, as doyen of the ambassadors at Constantinople, should on their behalf, negotiate the details of

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 350. To Lord Granville. 6 August 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 961. Nos. 356 and 371. To Lord Granville. 13 and 18 August 1880.



the surrender of the districts assigned to Montenegro with the Porte.<sup>1</sup>

Bismarck would not allow Hatzfeldt to take the lead. He detected "a difference between the position of the Doyen of the Corps Diplomatique when presenting a collective note, and his selection to negotiate an arrangement and settle its particulars,"<sup>2</sup> and in order to meet him Lord Granville substituted a proposal "that the Ambassadors should draw up among themselves a memorandum of the conditions which they would think best adapted to secure the peaceful transfer of the territory in question, and ask Count Hatzfeldt to present it."

The next step was to get an agreed memorandum. "The Porte were apparently ready to cede the Dulcigno district but objected to the surrender of Dinusi and Guida, and required an extension of the term in which the concession should be accomplished. The French and Italian Governments proposed that the Powers should accept this arrangement, requiring the Porte, however, to execute it at once, and maintaining the right of the Prince of Montenegro to claim at a future time the surrender of the two excluded villages. The Austrian Government were stated to concur in this suggestion, but preferred that the cession of Dinusi and Guida should be altogether abandoned."

Lord Granville told Baron von de Brincken that there was a risk of this change of purpose giving encouragement to the Porte to adopt a policy of evasion and delay in other questions, but that Her Majesty's Government would probably be prepared to concede the alteration if approved by the other Powers, and were particularly desirous to have the opinion of the German Government."<sup>3</sup>

By the end of August Germany had signified her acceptance of the Austrian proposal, "if the other Powers should do so," and a ship had been ordered from Malta to Brindisi on her way to Ragusa. On 3 September, the adherence of France made the agreement complete,<sup>4</sup> but the Porte's resources for procrastination were not yet exhausted for, before parting with Dulcigno

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 361. 14 August 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 481. Lord Granville to O.R. 11 August 1880.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 514. Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell. Confidential. 18 August 1880.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 411. To Lord Granville. 3 September 1880.

the Sultan made one last frantic effort to make conditions, and telegraphed to the German Emperor, appealing for his support, possibly hoping something from a Power which seemed ready to put her relations with her on a different footing from before. But the Emperor replied that he could not separate Germany's action from that of the other Powers.<sup>1</sup> The Sultan's telegram made the situation look rather serious, and the German Ambassador called on Lord Granville, pressing him for an indication of British policy, if Turkey persisted in her dilatory and unsatisfactory attitude.

Lord Granville wanted to take a strong line and thought Bismarck's opinion would be of great value, and when urged that all were waiting for an opinion from H.M.G., Granville said it was a question of what kind of pressure was to be applied to the Turks. The system of despatches was quite used up. Münster thought that the danger of going to Constantinople was that it might cause the break-up of Turkey altogether. Granville, while assenting to this, asked pertinently if there was any chance of the existing state of things preserving the Empire? His opinion had always been that Germany thought the dissolution of the Turkish Empire more imminent than was believed in England.

Count Münster asked whether it were possible to force the Dardanelles, and was informed that the unanimous opinion of the naval experts was that it was quite a feasible proposition. Granville then sounded Münster as to his opinion of an Austrian guarantee of the frontiers of Montenegro "while some ship force, or even troops of which other Powers would not be jealous were landed." Münster foresaw both Montenegrin and Russian objections to such a plan. With a final suggestion of "the seizure of some place which would be inconvenient to the Porte," and emphasizing that all these ideas were only suggestions, Lord Granville brought the interview to a close.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Odo Russell lost no time in bringing these suggestions before Bismarck, whose reaction showed that during this crisis England was speaking in a language that conveyed very little to those responsible for German policy.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 440. Confidential. 25 September 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 632. To Lord Odo Russell. Very Confidential. 1 October 1880.

*To Lord Granville.* Very Confidential. 5 October 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

“... I thought it essential that Prince Bismarck should be made acquainted with its contents with as little delay as possible, so I asked Count Limburg-Stirum to send it by messenger to His Highness at Friedrichsruhe.

To-day Count Stirum told me that Prince Bismarck having received Count Münster's report of his conversation with Your Lordship of 1st inst. intended to answer it forthwith and in detail by to-night's mail.

From the conversation which ensued I gathered that Prince Bismarck would explain that in sending a German ship to take part in the naval demonstration in favour of Montenegro, he had stretched a point for the sake of supporting and promoting the European Concert, but that he had every reason to doubt that public opinion in Germany would support the Government in taking part in any act of hostility against Turkey.

Germany would support the Concert of the Powers morally but would not feel justified in going the length of lending material assistance to coerce the Porte.

In regard to the local question of the Montenegrin frontier he thought Austria would object to the employment of Russian and Austrian troops but he did not expect the Austrian Government would feel the same objection if an English intervention were proposed. With regard to reprisals and the seizure of some place as a material guarantee, Prince Bismarck was of opinion that any such measure would probably fail to have the desired effect on the Porte, and would therefore not fulfil its object.

Count Stirum went on to say that Prince Bismarck felt honoured by Your Lordship's wish to consult his opinion, but that he felt himself reluctant to pronounce himself on the suggested demonstration at Constantinople, the consequences of which would be incalculable.

H.M.G. could, however, reckon on his cordial moral support in keeping the Concert of the Powers together. . . .”

By the “seizure of some place” Smyrna was indicated, but Lord Odo reported a few days later that Bismarck had advised the Emperor to act with Austria in declining to take part in the proposed demonstration, which Count Hatzfeldt thought Turkey would resist and which the Chancellor thought must

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 461.

fail as at Dulcigno from lack of landing troops.<sup>1</sup> Lord Odo himself wanted the more drastic solution. Had he been Bismarck, he said, he would have gone on his knees to Granville to "leave Smyrna to her figs and sail instead straight to Stamboul and take the Sultan by the Golden Horn, and put an end once for all to all this procrastination of the Porte. If the other Powers would not join . . . Britain should make for the Dardanelles 'with or without allies.' . . . I cannot help writing strongly because I want *our* policy to be a success and a triumph; and I firmly believe the key to success is to be found at Constantinople only."<sup>2</sup>

To adopt so bold a policy was not possible for a Granville in the Gladstone Government of 1880, but nevertheless he seemed to toy with the idea. He thought either of washing his hands of the whole thing or of "doing what is indefensible, but may be a great success, viz., to go to Constantinople at once."<sup>3</sup>

Gladstone was profoundly concerned. He told Challengel-Lacour he thought the task imposed on the Powers, and particularly on England, was very difficult. They were on the horns of the dilemma of Turkish procrastination and the necessity of maintaining the European Concert to obtain their ends by pacific means.<sup>4</sup> He also foresaw the danger of revolutionary explosions. So the proposal made to Bismarck was not the drastic one hoped for by Lord Odo Russell. Would the German Chancellor go so far as to constitute the Powers taking part in the demonstration as the mandatories of Europe, as in the occupation of the Lebanon in 1861, and would he instruct the German Consul in Smyrna to co-operate with the English naval officers and take part in a joint representation to the Porte?<sup>5</sup>

Bismarck would not. Unlike the new French Minister, who commended the plan, he saw no gain for Germany in following England's lead in this matter, and he advised the Emperor that it would "now be advisable to assume a more neutral policy in regard to Eastern affairs, so as to avoid being drawn 'beyond her depth into Turkish waters' by England, Russia and Turkey."

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 466. To Lord Granville. Secret. 9 October 1880.

<sup>2</sup>Fitzmaurice: *Granville*. II. 217-8.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup>D.D.F. III. 230. 5 October 1880.

<sup>5</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 651. To Lord Odo Russell. 10 October 1880.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 12 October 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

"... In his opinion the proposed occupation of Smyrna might fail to have the desired effect on the Sultan, whilst the sequestration of the customs would scarcely be felt by a government which is accustomed to be always in want of money.

If the Smyrna demonstration failed, England, Russia and Italy might feel bound to attempt a third demonstration at Constantinople, which would offer no great difficulty, but which might lead to very grave consequences, such as a fanatical outburst against the Christian residents of Turkey, which the fleets anchored in the Sea of Marmora would be powerless to prevent.

Under such circumstances, Germany would realize the benefit of abstention and the advantages which a neutral and independent attitude could afford in the future. . . ."

The most Bismarck was willing to do was to agree that the fleets should remain at Cattaro until further orders, but even his own Ambassador at Constantinople telegraphed that the Porte was seeking new excuses for delay in accusing the Prince of Montenegro of injustice and oppression towards the Albanian inhabitants of Spiz<sup>2</sup> and Podgoritza, and he had to admit when challenged by Lord Odo Russell that "he fully agreed as to the necessity of putting continued diplomatic pressure on the Porte until the promised cession of Dulcigno was effected."<sup>3</sup> But the end was at long last in sight. The opposition of Turkey suddenly collapsed and there was no need to go either to Smyrna or Constantinople. On 26 October Dervish Pasha surrendered Dulcigno to the Montenegrins.

### III

Three days before this surrender, Lord Odo Russell began his belated leave and returned to England. The Greek frontier

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 473.

<sup>2</sup>*Sic* in document.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 483. To Lord Granville. 19 October 1880. This conversation took place at Friedrichsruhe, whither Lord Odo had gone to see Bismarck as he did not wish to go on leave without an interview. He had not seen him for six months.

problem still remained to be settled, and although on holiday Lord Odo Russell could not get away from it. Granville thought it important to communicate to him the substance of a conversation he had had with Count Münster on 11 November on Prince Bismarck's eastern policy. He had expressed the hope that Germany still believed in the efficacy of diplomatic pressure even though he was averse to enforcing sanctions, and had emphasized the importance of maintaining unanimity and consistency. He would be glad to join in the advice of moderation that he understood the Governments of France and Germany were impressing upon Greece as soon as he knew the nature of the instructions being given by the Powers to their representatives. He had inquired whether "any receding from the position taken up to the present time regarding the Greek frontier had taken place, or whether any assurance had been given to Greece that she could not lose by conforming to the counsel of the Powers, and if so in what manner Prince Bismarck proposed that the decisions of the Congress and of the Conference at Berlin which both he and Baron Haymerle had already declared must be maintained, should eventually be carried into effect."<sup>1</sup>

Almost as soon as Lord Odo Russell returned to duty he was again writing despatches on the still outstanding adjustments of the Montenegrin frontier. He must have felt as though he had never left Berlin. . . . "The German Commission will be instructed to take part in the delimitation of the Dulcigno frontier as soon as the Powers are agreed upon immediate delineation,"<sup>2</sup> and "Germany will await decision of the other Powers, but doubts whether all will agree to admirals taking separate cruises with pre-arranged places of call for orders in case of necessity arising,"<sup>3</sup> German Government agrees to Your Lordship's proposal respecting the departure of the fleet from Cattaro and will send instructions to their naval commander to depart with the British Admiral and accompany him to Malta or any other place agreed upon. . . .<sup>4</sup> German Admiralty has confidentially informed the Foreign Office that the German ship *Victoria* must refit without loss of time, and on parting

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 726. To Lord Odo Russell. Confidential. 11 November 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 963. No. 547. To Lord Granville. 27 November 1880.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 549. 27 November 1880.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 553. 3 December 1880.

company with Admiral Commander-in-Chief may have to proceed to Trieste instead of Malta or elsewhere."<sup>1</sup> All through November and December this tedious kind of thing went on with regard to Montenegro, and the Greek frontier question was also occupying attention.

Two new proposals were now made to settle this question. Arbitration was suggested if Turkey and Greece would accept it on the one hand, or an acceptance of Turkey's overtures would be considered if larger concessions were made to Greece. Greece was to be persuaded to accept "provisionally to reserve for future discussion the best means for carrying out the rest of the Berlin award."<sup>2</sup>

Germany accepted the arbitration proposition, provided that it was acceptable to Turkey and Greece, that the Powers voted by majority and that there was no question of coercion in the event of failure.<sup>3</sup> Hatzfeldt, now in Berlin, did not believe that the Sultan would accept arbitration, though he would probably pretend to in order to gain time, but the German Ambassador thought the Porte might make larger concessions which Greece would be well-advised to accept.<sup>4</sup> Suggestions that arbitration might be successful if a previous understanding were reached among the Powers failed to command Bismarck's approval.<sup>5</sup> The arbitration scheme was before the courts of Europe during the whole of January, but as the month wore on the Greeks' distaste for it grew apace, and even France realized "that the attitude of the Porte in regard to arbitration should be made clear before putting greater pressure on Greece,"<sup>6</sup> and not only forbore to press a collective and simultaneous representation at Athens in favour of her scheme, but abandoned the proposal altogether. Yet another month wasted, and now the arbitration plan had been abandoned, Lord Granville in desperation instructed Lord Odo Russell "to ascertain if Prince Bismarck would be willing to make a proposal for the settlement of the Greek frontier, since the position of Germany with

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 555. Confidential. 3 December 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 963. No. 577. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 18 December 1880.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 580. 20 December 1880.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 587. Confidential. 26 December 1880.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* No. 590. 30 December, 1880.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 64. 979. No. 19. Confidential. 13 January 1881.

regard to Eastern affairs would render a suggestion emanating from His Highness more likely to be acceptable and successful."

*To Lord Granville.* 18 January 1881.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Prince Bismarck replied, through Count Stirum, that he knew of no effectual settlement of the Greek question which would not involve coercive measures, and that the German Parliament would not sanction any such on the part of the German Government.

He thought therefore that the Powers would do well to accept the new Turkish proposal to negotiate with their representatives at Constantinople on the chance of its leading to a peaceful solution. . . ."

The Greeks, wildly agitated at all this delay, were constantly warning the Powers of the dangers of the situation, and they might have become even more emphatic if they had known that Sir Henry Elliot was reporting suspicions that Haymerle was not at all anxious to see the problem settled, and that Bismarck was secretly favourable to a southern extension of Austrian power.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 21 January 1881.<sup>2</sup>—

"... As regards Prince Bismarck's oriental policy, there can be no doubt that it is based on a desire to favour the extension of Austria towards the South, and in so doing to preserve and protect her against any complications with Russia.

Before the Berlin Congress met, he advocated the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and even of Serbia to Austria and since the Berlin Congress he has privately admitted that he hoped to see the Austrian Empire extend to the Ægean and enter into a customs union with Germany. For the present no doubt he wishes to prolong the existence of the Turkish Empire—but if the collapse could no longer be postponed, his favourite solution to the oriental problem would be the peaceful division of influence in the Balkan Peninsula between Austria and Russia, and the former to extend to the Ægean and the latter to the Straits and both to be indebted to him for harmonizing their claims to the Sultan's inheritance.

To prevent a quarrel or conflict between Austria and Russia

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 979. No. 26.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 28.



after the dissolution of the Dreikaiserbund, he contracted a defensive alliance with Austria, the conditions of which are still unknown to Europe—and to prevent Russia and France from uniting against Germany, he threatened Russia with his Austrian alliance and offered France his support in everything she might desire.

When Her Majesty's present advisers came into office, Prince Bismarck apprehended three things:—

1st. That England and Russia might come to some special understanding about Turkey.

2nd. That Austrian interests in Turkey might suffer from an Anglo-Russian understanding.

3rd. That the creation of the Concert might diminish his influence in Europe.

His first apprehension was relieved when he received from St. Petersburg proofs that Her Majesty's Government had declined a special alliance with Russia in November last and that the Russian Government in consequence solicited his good offices to establish between them and Austria relations of confidence in regard to Eastern affairs.

By promoting the welcome wishes of Russia, Prince Bismarck saw his way to relieving himself of his second apprehension in regard to the prospects of Austrian interests in Turkey, and at the same time of commanding a majority of votes—four to two—in the European Concert.

My belief is that the immediate result of the re-establishment of the tripartite understanding has been that Austria, Germany and Russia have agreed to oblige the Sultan, by setting aside the Berlin award and leaving Janina and Metzovo to Turkey in exchange for Larissa and the island of Crete from Greece, and that they will work out this idea at the proposed discussion between the Porte and the powers at Constantinople. . . .”

Bismarck had, indeed, declared his intention of supporting such a discussion, subject to the concurrence of all the Powers. It was not to be a formal conference, but merely a series of discussions.<sup>1</sup> His own views he proceeded to expound privately and confidentially to Lord Odo Russell. Willing to support, he was unwilling to lead: coercion, which would be necessary to solve the question was inadmissible, and therefore he supported the Porte's proposal as even if it failed, it would tide over the

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 979. No. 47. To Lord Granville. 28 January 1881.

next few weeks. If it came to fighting, Greece must ultimately be defeated, but Turkey could gain no special or lasting advantages.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 30 January 1881.<sup>1</sup>—

“... Europe could manifestly not admit the destruction of Greece by her formidable foe, and if, unfortunately, war should after all break out between her and Turkey it would be advisable to localize the conflict, by warning the Porte that in defending their own territory against the Greeks, they must refrain from occupying Athens or annexing the kingdom of Greece to the Turkish Empire.

The conflict should be restricted to operations by land, and the Piraeus and other Greek ports should be protected against any attacks on the part of the Turkish fleet, by the presence of the ships of the concerted Powers.

By this means the war could be localized and after a first defeat and victory on either side Europe might offer her good offices with a better chance of being listened to.

If after all the Greeks were victorious and the Albanian populations willing to be annexed by them, which appeared unlikely, Greece might make her own conditions—whilst on the other hand if the Turks were victorious, which appeared more probable, the defeated Greeks would be obliged to accept whatever conditions Europe might be able to obtain for them.

In the first instance he thought that the Greeks would do well to accept the territory the Porte had already declared themselves willing to cede to her.

For those portions of the Berlin award the Sultan desired to retain to satisfy the Albanian influence, which was now all-powerful at Constantinople, His Majesty should be told that he must compensate Greece elsewhere, as for instance by the cession of the island of Crete.

The Sultan, who did not attach much importance to Crete, would probably be glad to pacify his Albanian advisers, whose power for evil he dreads, and the Albanians would be glad to retain Janina in exchange for Crete which they did not care about.

These were the views Prince Bismarck imparted to me on the 17th inst., with a request to Your Lordship to consider them as strictly private, personal and secret.

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 55.

Since then, however, he has communicated them officially to Baron Haymerle with a suggestion that Austria would do well to encourage an exchange of ideas among the Powers as to the best means of localizing the war if it cannot be prevented.

Personally, I am under the impression that a confidential exchange of ideas on the subject of localizing the coming war had already taken place some time since between Germany, Austria and Russia. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

At Lord Odo's suggestion, Mr. Goschen visited Berlin on his way to Constantinople. Here he secured a notable success, for he induced Bismarck himself to take the initiative in making a new proposal.

Lord Odo rejoiced at this change of policy. "He takes the lead overnight and initiates a proposal which will necessitate the use of a fleet and may involve contingent coercion." It was largely owing to Lord Odo Russell's efforts that Mr. Goschen had visited Bismarck with the invitation to him to take the lead, accompanied by a promise of British support. The suggestion had borne most desirable fruit. . . . "For ten years have I preached confidence in Bismarck as a means of success in foreign policy, but in vain! I never could overcome the deep-rooted distrust his wish for a cordial settlement with England inspired at home. The coming settlement of the Greek question in concert with Germany will, I trust, remove that feeling of mistrust for the future."<sup>2</sup>

The new proposal was that the six representatives of the Powers were to arrange yet a fresh frontier line. Greece was to be mollified by an offer of territory equal in amount to the Berlin award, but substituting Crete for that part of Epirus "where the pressure of Albanian Mussulmans would prove a source of discontent and trouble and of weakness also to Greece in the future." Greece was to be approached first, with encouraging promises of moral support and Turkey was to be warned that serious consequences would follow further prevarication. . . . If diplomacy failed in this last attempt, diplomacy would have to occupy itself with the problem of localizing the conflict.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See also *G.P.* IV. pp.23-24.

<sup>2</sup>Fitzmaurice: *Granville*. II. 228.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 979. No. 70. Mr. Millbank for Lord Odo Russell. 7 February 1881.

As Bismarck put it, "if moral pressure were not sufficient, immoral support might become necessary."<sup>1</sup>

It appeared as if it were not going to be sufficient. Notes were indeed presented on 21 February, but the massing of Turkish and Greek troops on the frontier, and the fierce attitude of the warlike Albanians gave very little grounds for optimism. Mr. Goschen found that his colleagues were determined to ascertain the last word of the Turks before finally committing themselves to the new boundary line, but Bismarck, now once more deeply engrossed in home affairs, feared that this attitude would only lead to an indefinite prolongation of the *status quo*.

"In his opinion no progress could be made at Constantinople until Greece had consented to a line drawn up by the Ambassadors and agreed to by their Governments. It was only when Greece was united to the Powers acting in concert, that a serious impression would be made on the Porte, who would otherwise take refuge in procrastination as heretofore until war ensued,"<sup>2</sup> but he felt he could not do more than advise, and if the Ambassadors preferred "to follow their own inspirations" he could not compel them to follow Hatzfeldt's lead.<sup>3</sup> He reiterated this opinion a week later. The Ambassadors must agree first, secure the adhesion of Greece and then coerce the Porte.<sup>4</sup> He complained bitterly of the great inconvenience to diplomatic negotiation that was caused by the indiscretions of the press—but this was an old grievance with him. Bismarck was never an admirer of a free press.

Bismarck's policy was hard to understand, for in Constantinople Count Hatzfeldt was maintaining a sphinx-like attitude. Mr. Goschen wondered whether Bismarck would remain faithful to his own proposal. Lord Odo thought he would,<sup>5</sup> and promised to try and obtain a copy of Bismarck's instructions to Hatzfeldt, though he admitted it would not be easy.<sup>6</sup>

How long this delicate position could have lasted, it is hard to say, but the Gordian Knot was cut by a new suggestion that a strip four kilometres broad along the existing Greek frontier

<sup>1</sup>*Annual Register*, 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 980. No. 105. To Lord Granville. Very Secret. 28 February 1881.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 107. 2 March 1881. Very Secret.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* No. 120. Confidential. 7 March 1881.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.* No. 123. Secret. 8 March 1881.

<sup>6</sup>F.O. 64. 980. No. 124. To Lord Granville. Secret. 8 March 1881.

should be defined by a technical commission appointed by the Powers.<sup>1</sup>

It is pleasant to turn aside from these tedious negotiations to notice that this was the moment when an interesting alteration in Lord Odo Russell's own personal standing took place. He had had to wait almost as long for his peerage as the Greeks for their new frontier, but he beat them by a little, for on 12 March he received the honour he had so long deserved, and which he had once been obliged to refuse. Henceforth he was to be known as Lord Ampthill.

The British Government, still uneasy about Bismarck's policy, asked Lord Ampthill for his impressions.

*To Lord Granville.* Very Confidential. 19 March 1881.<sup>2</sup>—

"... My impression is that Prince Bismarck will not move a step until the Ambassadors at Constantinople have acted on his suggestion of 8 February last to draw themselves the line of frontier they think should be recommended to Greece by the Powers.

He is in favour of proceeding gradually, step by step, and of dealing singly with each difficulty in question as it arises—because he holds that a premature disclosure of his programme would only lead to dissensions among the Ambassadors and enable the Turks to make counter moves which would add to the coming difficulties of the Powers.

Some days since Prince Bismarck observed that experience showed that Constantinople was at all times a peculiar place in which the Powers never seemed able to have their representative as well in hand as at other posts, and so he thought it more prudent not to let the representatives know too much at a time with a view to 'facilitating the task of their respective Governments.'"

A day or two later the two statesmen had a long and serious discussion on the delicate topic of Hatzfeldt's apparent reluctance to support his chief's own programme. Bismarck said he had never swerved, but his idea had been abandoned, and the Porte negotiated with instead. Unwilling to break the Concert, he had instructed Hatzfeldt to fall back, since the four Powers

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 140. 15 March 1881.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 980. No. 142.

more interested had practically declined to follow Germany's lead. The Concert was vital and could only be maintained by mutual concessions. Since no Power was prepared to fight for Greece, it was a mistake to re-open conferences with their antagonists. The only pacific solution was to sacrifice what we really wanted and to take what we could get. Peace was necessary at the moment, and Greece might regard the present settlement as a first instalment pending the dissolution of the Turkish Empire, and bide her time.

Lord Ampthill remonstrated strongly. Such an attitude appeared to his English mode of reasoning "insufficient and unsatisfactory," but Bismarck made it clear that Great Britain could expect nothing more from him. "Her Majesty's Government could doubtless enforce a more satisfactory [solution] to Greece by coercive measures, but he doubted whether Austria or Russia would support England, and as he had said from the beginning, he could personally only give the support of Germany to a pacific solution."<sup>1</sup>

The Ambassadors had agreed on a line by 29 March, but Bismarck adopted the attitude that he had lost all interest in the matter since his advice had been rejected at Constantinople,<sup>2</sup> though his apparent indifference was not proof against a further attempt to alter the note. He called Radowitz sharply to account for telegraphing such an alteration, and tartly ordered him to reply at once and name the colleague responsible for it. "As far as I have been able to ascertain," wrote Lord Ampthill, "Radowitz makes the French and Russian representatives responsible for the collective proposal of his colleagues."<sup>3</sup> When Lord Dufferin visited Berlin in the middle of April, Bismarck told him that he approved the procedure of handing over the ceded territory, whereby the Porte should transfer it to Britain, who would pass it on to Greece.<sup>4</sup>

Agreement was reached on 7 May, and Russell regarded this as a triumph for the "ability, tact and patience" of H.M.G. but it was not until 14 November that at last the Sultan handed over to Greece the portion that had been awarded to her so long ago. For three years the Greek and Montenegrin questions

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 980. No. 147. To Lord Granville. Secret. 22 March 1881.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 981. No. 174. 4 April 1881.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 188. 7 April 1881.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 981. No. 215. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 18 April 1881.

had occupied the thoughts of the British Government, but now at last they were settled and there was a breathing space. Granville was alarmed, distrusting lulls after his experience in 1870, but Lord Odo tried to reassure him by saying the lull, so far from being ominous, only showed that the Treaty was indeed proving the basis of lasting peace through the Concert of Europe, and was giving the various governments an opportunity of dealing with internal problems. He pressed home his favourite point that England and Germany should travel together, but frankly told Granville the truth that Bismarck, no believer in Parliamentary governments, had less faith still in liberalism and free-trade, and was far more in sympathy with Lord Beaconsfield's policy than with that of the Liberal Party. But when all this was said, he was confident that Bismarck would always co-operate when invited for the maintenance of European peace.<sup>1</sup>

## IV

There was almost as much delay in carrying out the provisions of the Treaty with regard to Roumania, as with regard to Greece and Montenegro.<sup>2</sup> It was long before the change of territory with Russia was made, and even then recognition of Roumanian independence was put off because the Roumanians could not satisfy the Powers with reference to the Jews. The whole Jewish question was mixed up with the great Hebrew financial houses in Berlin, one of whose magnates was in closest touch with Bismarck, and who even alarmed Hohenlohe by his apparent power over the Chancellor.<sup>3</sup> Bismarck was not prepared to grant recognition before Roumania had made all the necessary concessions. The attitude of the Roumanian Government, indeed, filled him with disgust and annoyance, which he took no pains to conceal from Lord Odo Russell.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 2 March 1879.<sup>4</sup>—

"... In a conversation I had to-day with Bismarck His Highness

<sup>1</sup>*Granville*: II. p.233.

<sup>2</sup>For a discussion of this question see Medlicott: *Slavonic Review* Vol. IX, pp. 354-72: 572-89.

<sup>3</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. p.210.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 932. No. 139.

expressed the aversion he felt for the Roumanians in language too violent to be placed on record in a despatch.

He accused them of dishonesty in regard to the stipulations of the Berlin Treaty—of arrogance towards Russia, and of insolence towards Germany, and deplored that they were not within his reach so as to administer the whipping to them they so richly deserved.

I made some fruitless attempts to get him to speak more calmly about the conditions on which he would be prepared to recognize their independence, but he would not consider the subject at all, and declared that he would have nothing to do with the Roumanians until they learnt how to behave themselves honestly and respectfully towards Germany.

Other persons beside myself have been struck by the excessive hostility of Prince Bismarck towards them, but I have not yet found any one able to account for it.

I suspect, however, that the Roumanian railway question has something to do with it, about which I shall make inquiry and report to Your Lordship as soon as possible. . . .”

A week passed, and Lord Odo Russell thought he had found the key he sought.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 8 March 1879.<sup>1</sup>—

“ . . . Germany holds between three and four hundred millions of marks of Roumanian railway stock. Your Lordship will recollect that when the Strousberg railway bubble burst, the German Emperor ordered the bankers Hausemann and Bleichröder to concert measures with a view of saving German interests.

His Majesty rewarded their exertions by making them barons. Since then the Roumanian railways have been under German supervision, and it appears that the Roumanians have not shown the German Emperor and Prince Bismarck that amount of respect and gratitude due for their actions in the matter, and have treated the German agents connected with the Bleichröder and Hausemann banks in a manner most offensive to the German Government.

The object of the Roumanians who want to buy their railways from Germany is to get them as cheap as possible, and they have thought to attain their object by assuming towards the German agents in Roumania belonging to the above-named banks, and

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 152.



who are all of the Hebrew faith, a bullying tone which they would not have ventured upon had these agents been so-called Christian subjects of the German Emperor.

Prince Bismarck, to mark his displeasure with the Roumanians, has instructed the bankers Bleichröder and Hausemann to suspend their negotiations for the sale of the Roumanian railways to the Roumanians, which they hoped to purchase out of the proceeds of the tobacco monopoly to an English company, and to offer those railways secretly both to the Russian and to the Austrian Governments.

Both Governments, I am informed, are entertaining the offer, as both have an equal interest to exclude the other's influence from Roumania."

Ever since 1874, when he had discovered that Prince Charles of Roumania "was indolent, and appeared more occupied as a Hohenzollern with his ancestors than with his contemporaries, and expected others to do for him what he ought to have done for himself,"<sup>1</sup> Bismarck had been very disappointed in him, and his present policy was doing nothing to re-establish himself in Bismarck's good opinion, though the Chancellor's complaint now was that he was forgetting he was a German prince.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 8 April 1879.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Prince Bismarck is equally displeased with Prince Charles for disregarding his advice, and forgetting, as the Chancellor says, that he is a 'German Prince.' The fact is that Prince Charles has given Prince Bismarck great offence by preferring the advice of his father, the Prince of Hohenzollern and that of his friend, Baron von Roggenbach, whom Prince Bismarck looks upon as a personal enemy.

Persons who know Prince Bismarck intimately are of opinion that he would gladly withdraw Prince Charles from Roumania, and leave the country to itself and its neighbours, provided he could bring about such a contingency without incurring the displeasure of the German Emperor and of the Crown Prince, who take a great personal interest in the success of their relative, Prince Charles.

Prince Bismarck would like Germany to be absolutely without a tie or interest in the East of Europe which could ever clash with those of Austria or Russia, who would never venture to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 807. No. 261.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 932. No. 199.

treat a Prince of Hohenzollern as they might a native hospodar. . . .”

The Roumanian situation changed entirely while Lord Odo Russell was away on leave in 1879. Bismarck had concluded the alliance with Austria, with all that it implied, and was more willing to approach the Roumanians, who, on their side, were equally anxious for recognition. A visit of Stourdza to Berlin in connection with the railway difficulty was crowned with success in September, and by 3 October the question was settled, though little progress had been made with the Jewish problem. Bismarck was dissatisfied, but Austria was anxious for good relations with Roumania, and Lord Odo reported on 7 November that he thought personally that Bismarck “under modified conditions” would yield to Austrian pressure and recognize the independence of Roumania.

The following year the Prince of Roumania paid his first visit to Berlin for sixteen years. He was very cordially received by Prince Bismarck, who had a long conversation with him. Lord Ampthill reported that the visit was considered to have furthered two objects the Prince was known to have at heart—his recognition as king, and Roumania’s admission to the Austro-German defensive alliance.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck had changed his Roumanian policy and was preparing the way that was later to lead to the Roumanian alliance.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 407. Confidential. 1 September 1880.

## CHAPTER XV

### EGYPT [1879-1884]

*A little less of Port Said and a little more of Porte done.*

—PUNCH.

*The Question of Intervention.*—Bismarck's attitude—the question becomes acute—the Sultan's appeal to Germany—French policy under Gambetta—fall of Gambetta—Freycinet's policy—Lord Granville's suggestion—attitude of Bismarck—Favour shown to Turks in Berlin—apprehensions of Lord Ampthill—change in French policy—Bismarck's advice to Turkey—sailing of Anglo-French squadron—Freycinet's proposal for a conference—Abdul Hamid's action—the outbreak in Alexandria—Granville's proposal to send Turkish troops—Bismarck's opposition and its reasons—events in Constantinople—Bismarck's attempt to persuade France to agree to Turkish intervention—G.B.'s view that the conference should be held as soon as possible—Bismarck's dinner-party—his attempt at conciliation.

*The Conference and after.*—Preliminaries—the Sultan's objections—misery in Egypt—the English take action—Lord Ampthill's views of Bismarck's attitude—Bismarck on the British occupation—views of the Emperor and Empress—an unfortunate incident—Bismarck's alienation from England over colonial policy—His views on English "ingratitude."

#### I

THE insistence of France that the Egyptian question should not be discussed at Berlin in 1878 may have avoided complications at the moment, but could not prevent the problem from becoming acute later. The state of the country was such in 1879 that it was obvious that something would have to be done<sup>1</sup> and the interests of France and Britain were so evenly balanced that the Egyptian question might be to their relations what the Balkan states were to those of Austria and Russia. Bismarck

<sup>1</sup>It is only fair to state that Crabitès throws a very different light on Ismail's rule. See Crabitès: *Ismail, the Maligned Khedive*.

told Lord Odo Russell on 2 March 1879 that if Anglo-French complications arose in Egypt he would support Britain "because it was in the interest of Germany that English influence should be greater in Egypt than that of France," and when Lord Granville assumed office in April 1880, Lord Odo Russell was persuaded that he could rely upon German support, but that he approved of Anglo-French co-operation in Egypt.

*To Lord Granville.* 29 April 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

"... I am glad to say that none of the pending questions are likely to affect the perfect harmony now happily established between England and Germany.

Prince Bismarck shows an earnest desire in all questions connected with the execution of the Treaty of Berlin to subordinate his views to those of the English Government, and to give his support to England, whose interests in the East he considers to be of far greater importance than those of Germany.

He is even more willing to give his support to any combined policy of England and France—as for instance in Egypt—because he looks upon an Anglo-French alliance as the basis of peace and order in Europe, and wishes Germany to become a party to it practically by giving that alliance his support in the general interest of peace. . . ."

As time went on and the feeble Tewfik could only look on as helplessly as his predecessor had done at the financial and social chaos in his country, the crisis arose that brought Lord Ampthill into close diplomatic association with the events on the banks of the Nile. The Sultan, who was busy cultivating relations with Germany, decided to appeal to her "as the most disinterested of his tormentors, for advice and protection,"<sup>2</sup> though Lord Ampthill believed that that advice was only given when Bismarck was in possession of the views of the Governments most interested, so that he knew what measures they thought most calculated "to promote the welfare of the Turkish Empire." Privately Lord Ampthill heard that Bismarck was in favour of a Turkish occupation rather than any other, and believed this view was shared by Austria and Russia.<sup>3</sup>

Early in 1882, when the Khedive's position was clearly

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 120. For the rest of this despatch see p.280.

<sup>2</sup>Lyall: *Dufferin* 305.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 983. No. 412. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 3 October 1881.

impossible, Gambetta was ready for joint action with Great Britain and wanted to discuss armed intervention, but his fall on 1 February brought Freycinet into power, and Bismarck became more and more critical of France. When Lord Dufferin reported that the Northern Powers were in favour of the *status quo* and held the existing position should not be altered except by arrangement between all the Powers and the Sultan, Lord Ampthill was afraid that this only too well represented German policy.<sup>1</sup> In view of this, Lord Granville suggested that the European Concert, with the Sultan, should be brought into action, a proposal which the French Government were prepared to consider.

Bismarck discussed the proposal with both Ambassadors. To Lord Ampthill he said he was in favour of an exchange of views, and thought that England and France had acquired a diplomatic *status quo* which should not be disturbed. Hoping that intervention would not be necessary, he held that, if it were, the Sultan, as sovereign in Egypt, should take action, but he would not block any action taken by the Powers in concert.<sup>2</sup> He was rather more definite in his exchange of views with Courcel. He deprecated a hostile attitude towards Egyptian agitators, unless supported by measures of coercion. If Turkish action in Egypt would raise too many objections he would admit the right of the two maritime Powers to be charged with the maintenance of order if they so desired, and provided it was understood that they were acting in the name of Europe. He was personally convinced that isolated action on the part of England and France could only lead to a friction between these two Powers, which might endanger the prosperity of the whole world. Courcel reminded him of the special interests of England and France in Egypt and that from the time of the Congress of Berlin onwards Bismarck himself had recognized the position, but the Chancellor's only rejoinder was to reiterate the danger of threats without coercion.<sup>3</sup>

The French, unwilling to adopt coercive measures themselves, were equally reluctant to see Turkey interfere. Lord Granville was not so unwilling, but Challemeil-Lacour set him-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 32. Confidential. 3 February 1882.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 50. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 15 February 1882.

<sup>3</sup>D.D.F. IV. pp.247-250.

self the task of convincing the Foreign Secretary that such a solution would be most undesirable. Meanwhile, to deal with the financial crisis precipitated by the action of the Notables, a note was presented to Bismarck by the British and French Ambassadors on 20 March, proposing an amendment of Article 34 of the new Organic Law relating to the powers of the Egyptian Chamber of Notables.<sup>1</sup> The German Government replied by an official notification of their recognition of the special and major interests of England and France in Egypt, and their consequent willingness to support the point of view expressed in the identic note, but when Granville further proposed to send two financial experts to Egypt, his suggestion was received with little enthusiasm by France. "We have had quite enough opinions on Egypt—the situation is as well-known as it can be without actually going to the spot. What we want to-day is not information, but decision."<sup>2</sup> That was true, but it sounded strange from the lips of Freycinet.

All this time the Turkish Ambassador was receiving the most flattering marks of imperial favour in Berlin. Special attention was paid to him at the birthday reception, and it was even rumoured when Prince Radziwill returned from Constantinople that his mission had been "to negotiate a tripartite alliance against Russian aggression and to draw a military cordon between the Slavs of Russia and the Slavs of the Balkans." Seeing these things, Lord Ampthill could not hide a certain amount of apprehension.

*To Lord Granville. Confidential. 22 March 1882.*<sup>3</sup>—

"... Meanwhile it is evident that the exchange of compliments of presents, of decorations, of diamonds and of assurances of mutual respect and admiration has practically led to a state of real intimacy between Germany and Turkey, which has never before existed, and which gives the Sultan a welcome excuse for leaving his ways unmended, and his people misgoverned, and places at the disposal of Prince Bismarck a useful ally in case of war with France or Russia, or both, according to circumstances. . . ."

This intimacy with Turkey marked the end of Bismarck's

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 99. To Lord Granville. 20 March 1882.

<sup>2</sup>D.D.F. IV. p.279.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 102.

real or assumed indifference with regard to Egypt. The French Ambassador was convinced that his policy was to satisfy the Sultan without compromising the joint interests of Austria and Germany. It was not his policy to support him in Tunis, but Egypt seemed to offer a fruitful soil to gratify him—hence his declaration in favour of a Turkish occupation, or if that were impossible owing to French susceptibilities, he would be prepared to support a change of Khedive.<sup>1</sup> His policy was ripening at a moment when a rift was appearing in Anglo-French relations over Egypt. Granville had to make one of his periodic statements to an inquiring House of Commons, and Freycinet took exception to his proposed statement that the two countries were perfectly in agreement, and wanted the declaration made in more general terms.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, Freycinet's policy itself underwent a change. Perhaps he was afraid that Bismarck's policy would lead to unknown depths, but he himself now proposed the sending of a joint squadron to Turkish waters, and indicated that France would even be prepared to support the calling in of Turkish troops if they were under the control of England and France, and under specified conditions laid down by the allies. Lord Granville, accepting this proposal, instructed his surprised Ambassador to solicit Bismarck's support. He did so, laying stress upon the importance of a united front, but he soon heard privately that the chance of German agreement was slender. Russia thought she ought to have been consulted, and Austria was unfavourable.<sup>3</sup> At the same time he refused an appeal of Sadoullah Bey to persuade the Western Powers to countermand the expedition.<sup>4</sup> But Lord Ampthill was still labouring under a sense of amazement at the revolution in French policy.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 27 May 1882.<sup>5</sup>

"... Up to the present hour my French colleague, in the many friendly and confidential conversations I have had with him, has not even admitted the possibility of M. de Freycinet ever being able to give way on a point on which all parties in France are united. The very existence of his administration is involved.

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. pp.297-298.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* 299.

<sup>3</sup>*F.O.* 64. 1006. No. 165. To Lord Granville. 19 May 1882.

<sup>4</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. pp.317-319.

<sup>5</sup>*F.O.* 64. 1006. No. 187.

I cannot therefore but feel curious to know how he will receive the disclosure that M. de Freycinet has consented to join with H.M.G. in asking the Powers to have troops ready to send to Egypt under strict conditions.

Baron de Courcel's objection to Turkish intervention in Egypt is not only founded on the belief that it will be as distasteful to the people and government of France as it may be disadvantageous to the people and progress of Egypt, but also on the conviction that Turkish intervention in Egypt will open the door, hitherto so jealously guarded by France and England, to the influence and interference of the Northern allies—Austria, Russia and Germany, who have already practically weakened and diminished the influence of France at Constantinople, and are now united to increase their influence at Cairo by backing up and enforcing the Sultan's direct authority in Egypt.

Turkish intervention in Egypt is indirectly tantamount to the intervention of the Dreikaiserbund in Egypt. . . ."

The attitude of Russia and Austria reminded Lord Ampthill of the stand made by Great Britain in 1876 when Lord Derby rejected the Berlin Memorandum "because we had not been previously consulted and thereby left Russia free to reconquer Bessarabia, and Austria to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc., etc., I hope that we may proceed to settle the Egyptian question without them."<sup>1</sup> Bismarck, who was at the time suffering from neuralgia, and bed-ridden, appeared to be backing up his allies, notwithstanding that he was making efforts to keep on the right side of Great Britain at the same moment.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 20 May 1882.<sup>2</sup>—

"Dr. Busch (vide Hatzfeldt) . . . has told me (*privately and confidentially*) that although Prince Bismarck had not felt at liberty to separate himself officially and depart from the attitude assumed by Count Kalnoky and M. de Giers in regard to sending instructions to their representatives at Constantinople, His Highness had nevertheless instructed him to speak privately to the Turkish Ambassador, Sadoullah Pasha, in the sense desired by Your Lordship, and that he had already done so, and recommended him to advise his Government not to exaggerate the

<sup>1</sup>*Granville*. II. p.264.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1006, No. 169.



supposed effect and consequences of the naval demonstration, but to abstain from interference, and confide implicitly in the policy and good intentions of England and France. . . .”

Bismarck wanted this message kept private for a few days, but three days later he himself informed the Austrian, Italian and Russian Ambassadors that Turkey had been advised to trust France and Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

When Lord Ampthill informed Bismarck of the sailing of the squadron, he expressed great satisfaction, and said he would be glad to co-operate at any time with the Powers as proposed by H.M.G. and France towards the maintenance of peace and order, and of the authority of the Khedive as established by the firmans of the Sultan, recognized by Europe.<sup>2</sup>

The squadron on its way, the British and French Governments advised the Sultan to support the Khedive and to order the three military chiefs and the ex-president of the council to proceed to Constantinople to explain their conduct.<sup>3</sup> Arabi Pasha in the meantime had been appointed Minister for War. Bismarck notified his approval, but Freycinet, still apprehensive, appeared impressed with the necessity of calling a conference to discuss the whole matter of the maintenance of the rights of the Sultan and of the Khedive, of international engagements and arrangements existing under them, whether with England and France alone, or with these nations and the other Powers, and also the preservation of liberties secured by the firmans and the prudent development of Egyptian institutions.<sup>4</sup>

Abdul Hamid had other ideas. It was too much to expect of him that he would receive the suggestion of a conference with open arms, but even he realized that something must be done. He decided to send an agent of his own, Dervish Pasha, on a mission to Egypt, and then tried to lull the Powers into a belief that this would be quite sufficient to restore order, and that now there was no necessity for a conference. The outbreak in Alexandria was the answer to this misplaced optimism.

These riots impressed Granville with the necessity of expedit-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1006. No. 183. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 23 May 1882.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 188. To Lord Granville. 27 May 1882.

<sup>3</sup>D.D.F. IV. p.333.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 1006. No number. (Copy of Identic Note). To Lord Granville. 2 June 1882.

ing the Turkish expedition under certain safeguards. Hatzfeldt explained Bismarck's policy to Courcel. He would remain true to his fixed policy of supporting any measures agreed to by England and France, provided they also met with the support of the other Powers, and sanctioned the efforts to get the Sultan to agree to a conference. When Courcel tried to plumb Bismarck's attitude on Turkish intervention, suggesting the conference might dispel French fears with regard to it, he gave him the impression that he recognized the force of French objections and saw the necessity of stipulating for guarantees.<sup>1</sup>

To the British Ambassador he held rather different language, which left Lord Amthill in a disturbed frame of mind.

*To Lord Granville.* 16 June 1882.<sup>2</sup>—

"... I deeply regret to say that Count Hatzfeldt has just informed me that Prince Bismarck on reflection finds himself unable to support Your Lordship's proposal to the Sultan to send troops to Egypt. 1st. Because the French Government have not yet acquiesced in that proposal and 2nd. because the conditions are so 'restrictive' that he cannot take upon himself to ask the Sultan to accept them. . . .

I expressed my very great regret at his hesitating to support a proposal he had hitherto appeared to favour, and said that my instructions distinctly stated that the proposal had been agreed to by the French Government.

I said that hesitation to support the only possible settlement of the Egyptian difficulty at this juncture involved a very grave responsibility and doubly so on the part of Germany, whose advice was unhesitatingly followed by several members of the European Concert, and I therefore earnestly hoped he would tell me in what manner his present objections could be met and removed.

His Excellency replied that he had later information than mine; that the French Government had up to the present moment not agreed to Your Lordship's proposal; that until England were agreed, he could not 'pronounce himself,' and that in no case could the German Government undertake to ask the Sultan to accept the restrictions put upon his sovereign rights to employ his army in the re-establishment of order in Egypt as proposed in Your Lordship's telegram of 13th inst. . . ."

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. pp.350-352.

<sup>2</sup>*F.O.* 64. 1006. No. 212.

Secret.<sup>1</sup>—

"... I must add that Count Hatzfeldt, after going through the usual form of saying that he 'would not now speak any longer as the Foreign Secretary to the British Ambassador, but privately and confidentially as Hatzfeldt to Ampthill, assured me that *the French Government persisted in telling the German Government that to sanction Turkish intervention in Egypt would be to commit suicide, and that in the face of that declaration Prince Bismarck could not in cold blood pass sentence of death on a friendly French administration.* Besides which, Prince Bismarck, by siding more with one than with the other Power, would be departing from the benevolently neutral attitude he wished to preserve towards the Anglo-French alliance in regard to Egypt—whilst on the other hand he would gladly support both whenever they were cordially agreed.

Prince Bismarck, however, he said, would never be a party to restricting the Sultan's sovereign rights in regard to his independent employment of troops for the re-establishment of order in Egypt, and in his, Count Hatzfeldt's, private opinion, the only possible settlement of the present difficulty was to let the Sultan settle it alone in his own way, without interference on the part of the powers, and then to make His Majesty responsible for the maintenance of order and of the *status quo* in Egypt.

The Turks, he said, had a way of their own of pacifying their co-religionists—they gave their agents a sword in one hand, and a bag full of decorations in the other and money in every pocket and told them to make the best of their chances.

I asked Count Hatzfeldt how he proposed to drive the Turks out of Egypt again, once they were unconditionally in possession?

That, he replied, was a question which might be left for future consideration—the first thing to think of was the safety of the foreign residents of all nations in Egypt—and the Agents of Germany, Austria, Russia and Italy reported that even an armed Turkish occupation would lead to a general massacre—was it then not better to let the Turks try their own national method of pacification by means of money, decorations and promotions rather than by forcing their hands and bringing on perhaps an inevitable outburst of Egyptian atrocities?

To every objection I raised, Count Hatzfeldt replied by an assurance that he and Dr. Busch knew the Turks and the Sultan better than any one else from the peculiar circumstances

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* 213.

attending their long residence in the East; that the German Government had no other interests in the question, but solely and absolutely those of general peace among nations; and that Prince Bismarck would be happy to wash his hands of all oriental questions, if he were not compelled by the institution of the European Concert to support the Powers interested and concerned the moment they were agreed among each other. Prince Bismarck had always agreed from the very beginning that a difference of opinion with regard to Egypt between France and England was inevitable, and his earnest wish was not to foster such differences, when they sprang up, by favouring one Government more than the other, but on the contrary to contribute as far as was in his power towards the continuance of the Anglo-French alliance, which he had always welcomed as a guarantee of peace in Europe, thanks to the love of peace which animated England in particular.

If the Sultan, Count Hatzfeldt said, were a man capable of accepting well-meant advice, he would joyfully jump at the proposed conference, but he was not—he was *unberechenbar*—incalculable—and would resist friendly pressure by deceitful assurances, duplicity or intrigue which would baffle his best friends and produce inextricable complications.

At this very moment, Count Hatzfeldt said, he had received confidential information that the Sultan was making secret overtures to Lord Dufferin to separate England from France and obtain English ships for the transport of Turkish troops, and he should not be surprised to hear that the Sultan was playing a similar secret game with any of the other foreign representatives at Constantinople.

Count Hatzfeldt spoke on for some time in the same friendly confidential, and as he explained, strictly secret manner, illustrating his views with well-told anecdotes and more or less light pleasantries.

I could not, however, refrain from an impression that he was paving the way for some unexpected action on the part of Prince Bismarck who may wish to retrieve his political reputation after the severe defeat his home policy has just sustained<sup>1</sup> in the German Parliament by some signal moral triumph in foreign policy which would increase the influence of Germany in Turkey and extend it also to Egypt. . . .”

Immediately after the riots in Alexandria, an emergency

<sup>1</sup>The Tobacco Monopoly had just been refused, Wahl: *Deutsche Geschichte*, II. 136.

meeting was held in Cairo at the Khedive's house, at which both Arabi Pasha and Dervish Pasha were present, the latter offering Arabi the help of Turkish troops to maintain order. Arabi's opinion, however, that the deposition of the Khedive was essential, was well-known, and the next day, accompanied by Dervish Pasha, Tewfik fled to Alexandria, and Turkish regiments were ordered thither by the Sultan.<sup>1</sup>

These were the circumstances which made it clearer to Granville than apparently to Bismarck that the Turkish intervention must be limited by well-defined conditions, while the French Ambassador in Berlin could only see in recent events a still more urgent reason for calling the conference together immediately, even if it had to be held elsewhere.

Bismarck now set himself the task of persuading Courcel that owing to the difficulty of an understanding between England and France, Turkish intervention was the best way out of the *impasse*. "Your risks in Egypt are not equal," he said bluntly. "If France sees her interests ruined there, it is a simple *lucrum cessans*, as the lawyers say. But if England loses the free disposition of the Suez Canal, which is a vital artery for her, it is a *damnum incidens*," a difference that would render an agreement well-nigh impossible. Bismarck promised Courcel that if France acted alone, Germany would not use the occasion to attack her, if the Sultan was counting on that, he was mistaken, but England would object, and France must not quarrel with her. All Europe was in favour of Turkish intervention. Even England demanded it, though Bismarck had nothing but withering scorn for the manner in which England had proposed it: "The British Ambassador had just made a communication to me which is the very height of tactlessness, typically Gladstonian. How can they expect to obtain the military co-operation of the Sultan when they presume to impose on troops, in a province of which he is the sovereign, control and supervision of foreign Powers, an obligation to evacuate the country at the end of a month and other conditions not less wounding? . . . If you give [a man you want to serve you] a punch in the stomach and then say to him 'forward, and do what I want' with what air do you think he will reply?"

This tirade left Courcel calm and he only committed himself

to the statement that his Government, in accord with that of Great Britain, thinking it necessary to end the procrastination of the Porte, considered it important that the conference should be held as soon as possible: "They propose that the six Governments declare to the Porte that if they do not accept the proposal of a conference at Constantinople within forty-eight hours, the conference will meet in another capital, with or without the participation of Turkey." This suggestion was not accepted altogether, but Bismarck closed the interview by inviting Courcel to a dinner-party where the whole question could be discussed with the other ambassadors.<sup>1</sup>

This party took place on 18 June. After dinner Bismarck read over and compared all the telegrams he had received within the last twenty-four hours dealing with the proposed conference. As Lord Ampthill listened his mind was occupied with a suspicion that Bismarck was about to spring some surprise upon Europe, and he was curious to know exactly how that surprise would be sprung, but the Chancellor seemed to have no striking comments to make, merely observing that it would save time if the date of the conference could be settled then and there as the Powers were agreed, and the Porte preferred to abstain. It was the duty of the Powers proposing the conference to propose the date, and he noticed that Freycinet had already suggested 22 June. Germany accepted the invitation "to a conference limited to a discussion of the Egyptian question, to meet at Constantinople on Thursday next, 22nd inst., and he would instruct the German representative at Constantinople accordingly."<sup>2</sup>

This settled, Bismarck said it would be premature in the circumstances to discuss the question of Turkish intervention, and to this both Courcel and Lord Ampthill agreed, though the Italian Ambassador showed signs of restiveness when Courcel added that the sole object of the conference was to re-establish the normal *status quo*, as established by the firmans of the Sultan and the arrangements made with Europe, especially France and England. Any awkward discussion of the matter was, however, shelved by Bismarck, and the party broke up.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. pp.364-371.

<sup>2</sup>*F.O.* 64. 1006. No. 228. To Lord Granville. 18 June 1882.

<sup>3</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. pp.376-378.

Meanwhile, Lord Ampthill had to explore the possibilities of Bismarck's support of an alternative suggestion as he was not in favour of the terms under which England had proposed Turkish intervention. This was that the terms should be settled by the ambassadors. The British Government were not wedded to any particular form, but attached importance to the sending of troops. Something must be done at once, and if the Sultan would not send them, other means must be adopted to restore order. This was obvious, but Bismarck quoted with approval the attitude of the French Government who "preferred not to press the question while the Sultan himself saw serious objections and dangers to sending his troops to Egypt, and believed in the ultimate success of the conciliatory policy he had for the moment adopted." Lord Ampthill pertinently reminded him that English public opinion would not calmly watch arrangements in Egypt "which would destroy the influence and credit of England and of Europe in the East." Bismarck agreed, saying that, approached by almost every government commercially interested, he had yielded to an appeal, privately made by the Khedive and privately supported by the Sultan, for advice. He had instructed the German Consul-General at Cairo, Count Saurma, to find out what could be done to conciliate the parties to avoid further trouble.

"In so doing, he was acting merely the part of an 'honest broker' . . . as on former occasions, and he hoped the Powers would instruct their agents to lend their assistance and influence to their German colleague." Count Saurma reported that both the Sultan and the Khedive agreed to the formation of a new ministry under Rayhub Pasha, and then Bismarck added that Arabi had become a power to be reckoned with. From this admission Lord Ampthill knew that Bismarck was prepared to negotiate with him and that he was not altogether out of favour with the Sultan.<sup>1</sup> It is also probable that Count Saurma's instructions are the key to Bismarck's pretended indignation at Gladstone's "ineptitude."

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 21 June 1882.<sup>2</sup>—

" . . . In my previous correspondence I have had occasion to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1006. No. 234. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 19 June 1882.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* No. 245.

point out that Prince Bismarck, after the severe defeat his home policy had sustained, might be tempted to retrieve his political reputation by some success in foreign policy, which would increase the influence of Germany in Turkey, and extend it also to Egypt.

Recent events lead me to think that at the secret request of the Khedive and of the Sultan he is willing to promote a provisional arrangement in Egypt with the powerful co-operation of Arabi Pasha, for the purpose of preventing, if possible, further bloodshed and massacre.

If in the coming conference he seeks to maintain and increase the influence of Germany in the East, he may possibly support the Sultan's policy more than that of the other Powers, and then I should not be surprised to hear that the German representative in the conference took a somewhat different view of the *status quo* the conference is to re-establish than the representatives of England and France.

My reason for thinking this is that I have been privately told on high authority that Prince Bismarck has been heard to attribute to the *status quo* which England and France wish to re-establish in Egypt the national movement against foreigners, and the military despotism it has created. . . ."

## II

In spite of the fruitless protests of the Sultan, who contended that the latest reports proved that order had been restored, the conference met on 22 June, under the presidency of Count Corti. No favourable auspices attended its opening. The Sultan's attitude in obstinately abstaining would have discouraged a Moses, though it probably would not have surprised him, but the attitude that Bismarck had taken up was even less promising. The outrages of 11 June overshadowed the assembly, and there was a gloomy feeling abroad that force alone could settle the question. The first memorandum reached Berlin after Bismarck had gone to Varzin. Lord Odo, who had accompanied his wife to Schlagenbad, had returned immediately to the capital. It merely notified the meeting, expressed regret at the abstention of Turkey, and a hope that ultimately the Sultan's co-operation might be forthcoming. Count Hatzfeldt can hardly be accused of going too far in calling it "a useless



measure," while other remarks of his convinced the ambassadors still further that the Sultan could rely on German support for the time being.<sup>1</sup>

The inauspicious opening of the conference was followed by futile discussions while in Egypt everything was going from bad to worse day by day. Europeans were emigrating, the misery of the native population was pitiful, and the new ministry, appointed, it was said, by the orders of Bismarck himself, was manifestly unable to cope with so desperate a situation. Freycinet was inexorably opposed to the use of force lest he should put himself wrong in the eyes of Europe, but since everything else had failed, and failed completely, and since it was clear that with Germany backing the Turks, no decision would be reached by the conference, Great Britain showed that she did not mean to look on helplessly for ever. Lord Ampthill was convinced that action on the part of England would meet with Bismarck's approval: "If we are compelled to protect our interests ourselves, then Prince Bismarck will side with us, because his sympathies are always on the side of force."<sup>2</sup> On 11 July the British bombarded Alexandria.

*To Lord Granville.* 15 July 1882.<sup>3</sup>—

"Let me congratulate you most sincerely and heartily on having so tactfully steered out of the inevitable complications of 'entangling alliances' into the independent prosecution of a truly British national policy. Everybody I meet seems overjoyed that we are asserting our right to protect our own interests, and have taken the lead of the concert into our own hands. Everybody congratulates me on your policy, with the exception of my French colleague, who is quite broken down with disappointment at Freycinet's weakness, and the absence of national pride in the French chambers. Münster is probably right in thinking that Bismarck will now be reticent and reserved. Hatzfeldt tells me that Bismarck becomes simply furious at the mere mention of the Egyptian question, and will scarcely ever read what is sent to him on the subject. 'Let the Powers interested settle it as they please [he writes to Hatzfeldt] but don't ask me *how*; for I neither know nor care. . . .' He was so angry with Count Saurma for interfering with our admiral's measures

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1006. No. 252. To Lord Granville. Secret. 26 June 1882.

<sup>2</sup>*Granville*. II. p.262. (30 June).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* pp.268-9.

at Alexandria, that he wanted to recall him then and there; but Hatzfeldt interceded, and he was blown up instead, and told to mind his own business for the future. . . . Although Hatzfeldt does not say so, I can see that he is disappointed at the duplicity and absence of practical sense in the Sultan, on whose professed confidence in Germany he had probably reckoned too much. Bismarck, I think, will support any action we take, but will refrain from advice however much he may wish England to go ahead and settle the question as you think best for Europe."

Meanwhile, private worries were causing Lord Ampthill much anxiety. His wife's health was far from good this year, and he now prepared to follow her to Schlagenbad, and to accompany her to St. Moritz, in the hope that it might improve. He did not return till 10 September, and by this time the decisive battle had been fought in Egypt, and for the time being the British were masters of the situation.

Lord Ampthill wrote to congratulate Lord Granville. He was sure Bismarck approved, for recent events were in accordance with his plans for dividing up the Sick Man's inheritance—Austria in Bosnia, France in Tunis and England in Egypt. *A gradual dismemberment of the Turkish Empire* is the only pacific solution to the Oriental Question.<sup>1</sup>

For a while there was a lull in the diplomatic world, but towards the end of October certain Powers professed concern at the British Government's delay in disclosing their intentions with regard to Egypt. The German Government did not associate themselves with this impatience, and Busch told Lord Ampthill that Bismarck thought the longer the occupation lasted the better.<sup>2</sup>

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 16 December.<sup>3</sup>—

" . . . From private sources I have been very confidentially informed that in speaking of the 'situation' he expresses great satisfaction at England's successes in Egypt, and some anxiety lest the time required to settle what the future of Egypt is definitely to be, should allow of complications, or encourage France to make what he calls a 'scientific retreat.'

<sup>1</sup>Granville. II. p.273.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1008. No. 389. To Lord Granville. Most Confidential. 20 October 1882.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 1008. No. 471.

The French, he says, represent themselves to him as having been deeply hurt by the offer of the Presidency of the Caisse de la Dette publique, which could not compensate them for the loss of political influence. What they hoped for, they tell him, was the appointment of a French minister in the Egyptian Government.

He is glad to think their thoughts are diverted from their Egyptian losses by the prospect of colonial acquisitions, and to hear that they are sincerely considering how to neutralize the revolutionary elements of all Europe that threaten France in Geneva—a policy which would have his full sympathy. . . .”

On 28 December Lord and Lady Amphill had the honour of dining with the Emperor at the palace. Both the Emperor and the Empress took the opportunity of congratulating Lord Amphill on British policy, and of expressing “the great interest they had taken in and the pleasure they had felt at the success of our arms in Egypt.” The coming events in the valley of the Nile cast no shadow before in Berlin in 1882, and the year 1883 was something like the beach at low tide; the high waters of past crises had receded and the new flood had not yet submerged its sands, though they were gathering from many quarters.

An unfortunate incident in January, handled not too tactfully by Granville, played its part in augmenting Bismarck’s disapproval of British policy, which was to become so marked in the colonial sphere. The long-expected circular on Egypt was published in the *Times* before being communicated to the German Government, and Lord Amphill gently drew the attention of Lord Granville to the inconvenience this was causing.

*To Lord Granville.* Most Confidential. 12 January 1883.<sup>1</sup>—  
“ . . . It is thought surprising that the *Times* should have been favoured with information about the long-expected circular on Egypt without it having been previously communicated to the Governments concerned, and notwithstanding my explanations to the contrary, it is assumed that the *Times* articles were a *ballon d’essay* on the part of H.M.G. to sound public opinion before sounding the Powers.

Prince Bismarck told my informant that he could only explain it by supposing that H.M.G. wished to test whether Gambetta’s death had produced any change in political parties in France in regard to the Egyptian policy of the French Government.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1024. No. 16.

To-day my French colleague told me that Count Hatzfeldt had assured him that he had not yet received the circular from England, but thought that it had reached Constantinople, from whence he expected to hear more about it very shortly.

Under these circumstances I cannot but think that the earliest possible communication of the circular to the German Government is desirable, so as to remove any erroneous impression which further delay may engender.

P.S. Since writing the above, I learn that Prince Bismarck has, on several occasions expressed his surprise at not receiving the circular before its contents were communicated to the press. . . ."

The delay was unfortunate, but worse was to follow. The circular arriving the next day, the prompt Lord Ampthill, with the best intentions in the world, and anxious to mollify the German Government hastened to communicate it. Immediately afterwards a disconcerting telegram came, instructing him to postpone communication. "Too late," he wired in reply, and wrote to explain his dilemma.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 13 January 1883.<sup>1</sup>—

" . . . My reason for acting promptly on Your Lordship's first telegram, which directed me to communicate without delay, was that I was again told confidentially late last night at a concert given by the Austrian Ambassador, by a personal friend of Prince Bismarck that he dwelt frequently on the subject of the *Times* article, and complained of not having yet received the circular, about which he expressed great personal interest.

Baron von Bleichröder, who had seen the Chancellor on financial affairs yesterday, also had noticed symptoms of impatience on the part of His Highness at being 'the last to receive the English circular about Egypt,' and Count Hatzfeldt, who is naturally very reserved, volunteered to tell me that 'le Chancelier attend la circulaire égyptienne du Gouvernement de sa Majesté annoncée par vos journaux, avec impatience.'

As I could not recall the communication made this morning I called on Count Hatzfeldt this afternoon; and without mentioning the instruction I had received to postpone the communication I told him that I wished to add to what I had said before that I begged he would consider the circular as private and confidential until it had been finally sent and received by all the Powers concerned.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1024. No. 20.

This he promised to do, and I hope that time will thereby be gained to rectify the error I committed in acting too promptly on Your Lordship's first telegraphic instructions. . . ."

Unfortunate episodes like these, small in themselves, have an important bearing on the events that were later to lead to Anglo-German estrangement. They help to explain, if not to justify, Bismarck's petulant outbursts against Great Britain two years afterwards when there was no longer an experienced Ambassador in charge of affairs in Berlin.

The following year, when Bismarck was feeling sore at the British attitude towards German colonial activities, he warned a startled Granville through his son, Herbert, that he would have to review his Egyptian policy in the light of this unwelcome unfriendliness, owing to the clamour of public opinion. How little Granville understood Bismarck may be gauged from his reaction to this warning that he would no longer receive German support at the forthcoming Egyptian conference.

*To Lord Ampthill.* Confidential. 14 June 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... I said that I objected to anything in the nature of a bargain between us. Each question ought to be discussed on its own merits.

As regards Egypt, I relied upon the support of the Chancellor. My reliance was based upon two grounds. 1. The very friendly attitude which H.H. had invariably maintained towards us, both in words and deeds, and secondly the general policy which during the four years I had been in office H.H. had consistently and successfully pursued with a view to maintaining the peace of Europe.

The failure of the Conference, I observed, would be a great disaster, and might lead to very serious complications.

Count Herbert said he did not raise any question of bargain, but the German Government expected their rights to be respected.

I replied that if the German Government had rights, which we, on examination could admit, Count Herbert Bismarck might be sure that we should not only do so, but be ready to meet the German Government with great cordiality in the matter. . . ."

In 1879 Lord Odo Russell had reported that Bismarck would

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1102. No. 169b. From Lord Granville.

support Britain in Egypt because it was to the interest of Germany to do so; if his country's interests could now be better served by withdrawing that support, Bismarck would not hesitate, but the fear of such a breach between Britain and Germany must have saddened the last days of an Ambassador who had laboured so patiently for a good understanding.

## CHAPTER XVI

### GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE TREATY OF BERLIN

[1878-1884]

*In every alliance the relations are those of horse and rider :  
as for me, I prefer the part of rider.*

—TALLEYRAND.

*Turkey.*—Change in Bismarck's attitude—Turkey's request for German officers—Granville's protest—German assurances—the request renewed—railway project rumours—visit of Ali Nazim Pasha to Berlin—Bismarck's own story of the visit—favour shown to Turkish Ambassador by the Emperor—further development of Turco-German intimacy.

*Russia.*—Strained relations after the Treaty—Russia and the Austrian Alliance—Bismarck's conversation with St. Vallier—the Emperor and Russia—Russian attempts at rapprochement—meeting between Bismarck and Gorchakov—alleged proposal of Lord Odo Russell—Bismarck's report to the Emperor on foreign affairs—visit of Saburov to Friedrichsruhe—negotiations between Russia and Germany—assassination of the Tsar—the agreement signed—the Dantzig interview—Skobelow's speech—meeting between Bismarck and Giers—Lord Ampthill's view of new war scare—further visit of Giers—Bismarck's growing dislike of Saburov—Saburov replaced by Orlov—Russian loan floated in Berlin.

*Austria.*—Austro-German cordiality after the Congress—a passing cloud—the Austro-German Alliance—Lord Odo's information and views—Berlin secrecy—Lord Odo's further impressions—economic difficulties between Germany and Austria—war rumours—Count Bismarck's visit to Vienna—duration of Alliance extended—Lord Odo's view—Austro-German relations at his death.

*France.*—Improvement in Franco-German relations—St. Vallier's visit to Varzin—German Government's anxiety to retain him in Berlin on resignation of French Government—his terms—continued cordiality—change in French Egyptian policy—Gambetta's speech—renewed hostility—Lord Odo's fears—St. Vallier's attempts to still troubled waters—excitability of French Government with regard to Tunis—St. Vallier's remonstrances to his own Government with regard to their provocative German policy—rumoured German advance to France—St. Vallier's resignation—Courcel in Berlin—resignation of Gambetta—Lord Ampthill's anger at renewed French scare—German reaction

to Gambetta's death—Franco-German tension—the insult to the King of Spain—position at Lord Ampthill's death.

## I

GREAT statesmanship does not prepare for the event that has already happened, and the Congress of Berlin had brought one situation to an end and created another. In these circumstances Bismarck was ready to modify his foreign policy in so far as the new state of affairs seemed to him to call for a change of relationships. German interests had hitherto been best served on the diplomatic stock exchange by the role of honest broker, but the market was expanding. Bidding for African stock was beginning, and the part of broker looked less remunerative than before; it was possible that it would be better to enter the market as dealer, and it now began to enter into Bismarck's plans to acquire influence at Constantinople. The change from broker to jobber involved a delicate adjustment of relationships with former clients, and Lord Odo Russell's despatches throw an interesting light on this transition. The full significance of the change was not apparent for many a day, but when German advisers and officers first went to Constantinople the initial step was taken which was to lead to German penetration in Asiatic Turkey balancing Austria's share in Europe and England and Italy's in Africa. Only Russia, who alone had fought the Turk, saw her stock decline in value, as the independence of Bulgaria developed along very different lines from those she had visualized.

Early in July 1880, while the Porte was putting every obstacle in the way of the carrying out of the boundary clauses of the Treaty of Berlin, Lord Odo reported that German military officers were being invited to act as instructors in the Turkish army, and that Bismarck was inclined to favour the request.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 17 July 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

"... I have been privately informed on trustworthy authority that Prince Bismarck's principal motive for complying with His Majesty's wishes is to get possession of correct and reliable information respecting the secret state of affairs in Turkey which it may be useful to him to know hereafter, because he is personally

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 314.



under the impression that the unanimous efforts of Europe to reform the Turkish Empire are hastening on the collapse of the central authority at Constantinople.

Prince Bismarck is reported to have somewhat cynically observed to a friend that, since the last attempted race for Constantinople had induced the Powers most interested in it to take up their posts of observation for the future at Sophia, Novi Bazar, Cyprus, the next race would probably bring them all still nearer to the winning post, when a comfortable seat, secured beforehand, in the grand-stand, might better enable Germany to judge of their respective chances, and make her book accordingly. . . ."

Lord Granville was most perturbed. Such a step at such a moment could only discourage Europe and encourage the Turk. Münster, to whom he expressed his concern, discounted the importance of the move, and said the plan would not be carried out if there were any fear that the Porte would exploit it. Lord Granville thought it diplomatic to agree to Count Münster's explanations, but pointed out that in the prevailing circumstances it would be advisable that neither England nor Germany should enter into any such arrangement without informing the other.<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks passed, and the German papers announced that a staff of German financiers and clerks had returned with a Herr v. Wittendorf to Constantinople to reorganize the Turkish Exchequer. Prince Hohenlohe, in seeking to allay alarm, threw dust in Lord Odo Russell's eyes, telling him "he did not know much about the matter, and could not tell him either their number or their qualifications—the only thing he said he knew for certain was that no officers or military men had been sent, nor would any be sent in the future, so long as pending questions had not been definitely settled."<sup>2</sup> But he had already written to the Crown Prince, who had expressed doubts of the wisdom of sending officers, proving himself fully in the confidence of Bismarck on the matter, and personally persuaded of its advantages.<sup>3</sup>

British alarm was shared by Greece and France, and it

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 957. No. 431. Granville to O.R. 24 July 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 377. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 19 August 1880.

<sup>3</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 268.

increased when the Sultan's Aide-de-Camp visited Berlin in October. So persistent were the rumours that his visit was connected with the appointment of German officers that a formal denial was issued,<sup>1</sup> which may have been true in the letter, though the future disclosed that both Turkey and Germany had more in their minds than they were willing to admit.

The question was re-opened the following summer, when on 24 July Count Hatzfeldt admitted in confidence to the French Ambassador that for some time past the Sultan, worried at the state of disorder in the Turkish army, had applied to Germany for the services of a German officer to reorganize and reform the service. Unless the French Government objected Bismarck would grant leave for the purpose. At the moment the French were not prepared to make difficulties,<sup>2</sup> and the officer accordingly went. Lord Granville was preoccupied with trying to interest Bismarck in the fate of the Armenians, but while the Chancellor was thinking of increasing German influence at Constantinople he was not likely to play with the idea of humanitarianism, he left that, as he said to Giers, to England.<sup>3</sup>

The appointment of German officers coincided with a scheme of Dr. Strousberg, the railway speculator, to build a line from Constantinople to Bagdad, with which Bleichröder was said to be connected. Lord Ampthill, instructed to find out what interest Bismarck was taking in the matter, replied on 14 October 1881, "No interest whatever," and a fortnight later he reported that the scheme was not even submitted to the bankers because they viewed it with such disfavour. So far as the discredited Strousberg was concerned this was accurate enough, but in November a certain Drigalski Pasha was granted the concession that he had sought in vain. Lord Ampthill inquired if it were correct that this gentleman enjoyed the favour of the Emperor and that this was why he had recently been appointed one of the Sultan's Aides-de-Camp. Hatzfeldt did not deny this, but maintained that his speculations, as a poor man with a very large family, were no concern of the German Government.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 484. To Lord Granville. 20 October 1880.

<sup>2</sup>D.D.F. IV. p.80.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 983. No. 393. To Lord Granville. Secret. 17 September 1881.

A few days later the diplomatic world was interested to hear that the Sultan's Adjutant, Ali Nizam, was coming to Berlin with Reschid Pasha, bearing the insignia of the Order of Muscham Imtiaz for the Emperor, but just before his arrival, when all was ready for his reception, a telegram notified that his rank had been raised from that of envoy extraordinary to that of ambassador. The extremely cordial and ceremonious reception accorded to the visitors only emphasized Lord Dufferin's reports that there was no longer any other influence in Constantinople than that of the German Ambassador, and everybody suspected that the real object of the visit was a political mission. Bismarck himself gave Lord Ampthill an account of the visit and its motives, and his own policy.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 20 December 1881.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Yesterday evening Prince Bismarck asked me to call on him to tell me that the Turkish emissaries . . . who had brought diamond stars to Berlin and had asked for gold in return, which he did not however think they would find the Berlin capitalists much tempted to lend them, had also asked them, he said, for protection against their protectors, who, with the sole exception of Germany, in their opinion, wanted to cut slices out of their skin, and press advice upon them for their so-called good, which, if adopted, would, they declared, hasten on the downfall of the Turkish Empire. The Sultan in his distress, they said, appealed first for protection and moral support to Germany, as the only disinterested Power among them, to save him from his friends, and secondly for practical advice in the shape of German officers and officials to improve his army and to regulate the various branches of his administration, in return for which the Sultan through them offered his alliance, offensive and defensive to the German Emperor.

Prince Bismarck said, in reply, that he had begun by reminding them that he had already lent the Sultan some German officials to reform certain branches of their administration and he would also lend them officials to improve the administration of their army, but he would not lend them any officers to serve in their army, first because they had plenty of excellent officers of almost every nation in Europe who could drill their troops, and secondly because the best German officers would not consent to serve in Turkey and bad ones would be of no use to them.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 984. No. 481.

To this, Prince Bismarck told me, Ali Nazim had modestly observed, with downcast eyes, that the worst German officers would still be infinitely better than the best Turkish officers, an observation which I could perceive had gratified the German Chancellor beyond measure.

He had then asked Ali Nizam what was meant by an alliance with Germany? He had read in the newspapers that the Sultan flattered himself that by joint action with Germany in the event of war with France, he could recover his suzerainty over Tunis, and if that were really the case, the Sultan was indulging in dreams that could never be realized.<sup>1</sup>

To this query Prince Bismarck observed to me he had fully expected an eloquent denial on the part of the Pasha of the newspaper reports he had alluded to, but Ali Nazim was silent and made no reply, as if he could not deny that his master and Sultan really thought so.

Prince Bismarck then solemnly declared to him that Germany would never attack France unless attacked herself or seriously threatened, and would never fire a cartridge for Turkey under any condition whatever.

Turkey must be content to hold her own and make the best of what she had, and any attempt to recover what she had already lost would, in his opinion, be suicidal to the Ottoman Empire.

He considered Tunis to be lost to the Sultan for ever, and if His Majesty went to war to recover Tunis and protect Tripoli—Germany would remain strictly neutral. He did not himself for one moment believe that France had any designs on Tripoli, a sandy desert she did not covet, but if the Sultan seriously feared for Tripoli, why not ask England to propose to the Powers interested a joint guarantee, which would relieve the Sultan of all further anxiety.

This ended their first interview, but the Sultan's envoys, Prince Bismarck said, had requested to see him once more to take leave, and before receiving them he wished to tell me, for Your Lordship's information, what they had come to say, and what he had proposed to reply to the Sultan through them. He begged I would correct him if he in any way misinterpreted what he believed to be the Eastern policy of Her Majesty's Government.

He would tell them that the Sultan was mistaken in not placing implicit reliance in the good faith and friendly advice of England, who was Turkey's best friend and with whom he wished to act at all times in harmony and cordial concert.

<sup>1</sup>See *Times*. 16 December 1881.

Germany was allied with Austria and Russia, and he could answer for it that Austria would be a friendly neighbour to Turkey, whilst the present Emperor of Russia was a peace-loving man, who wished to improve the internal administration of his own Empire, and had no temptations, like his father, to go to war with Turkey. General Ignatyev had not influence enough to alter his Imperial Master's peaceful policy, so that Turkey had nothing to fear for the present from Russia.

What France might do, no one could foretell, but he believed that Tunis was as much as she could digest and that her appetite would not extend to Tripoli.

The Eastern policy of England he believed to be based on the absolute necessity to keep the road to India free, the earnest desire to maintain the political *status quo* in Turkey, in Asia and in Egypt, and the philanthropic wish to improve the material condition of the Sultan's subjects. His Majesty had therefore every reason to confide and rely in the policy of England, whilst Germany had every reason to support that policy because it was conducive to the maintenance of peace and order in Europe.

He looked upon the breaking up of the Turkish Empire as so great a danger to Europe that he was prepared to go to great lengths to keep it together, at least as long as he lived himself, for what happened after his death he had no means of controlling; and as the Turks as a military nation had proved themselves to be the race best able to keep order among the various nationalities composing the Empire, he would support the Turkish Government for the sake of keeping the Empire together.

In regard to Egypt he also agreed with England, that the *status quo* should be maintained, and he thought England right to resist the interference of any other Power in Egypt, and he held that England would be justified in going to war to resist any foreign interference with Egypt, and if ever he should be consulted about a foreign occupation of Egypt, he would give his opinion in favour of a Turkish occupation, and would object to any other but a Turkish garrison for Egypt.

He agreed in all points with the policy of England except in one, and that was in the philanthropic side of her policy. He believed that pressure for reforms could be overdone and actually did more harm than good, because the irritation produced on the Turkish mind by high foreign pressure manifested itself by increased procrastination and led to the very result it was so desirable to obviate.

He could therefore not give his support to a policy of pressure for reforms and believed that better results could be obtained by

leaving the Sultan alone and giving the Pashas time to reflect on the advice already tendered by the Powers since the Congress of Berlin, which he flattered himself had really laid the foundation of lasting peace in Turkey.

I thanked Prince Bismarck for his friendly communication and said that he had rightly interpreted our policy in regard to the road to India and the maintenance of the political *status quo* in Turkey, Asia and Egypt, but that we could never cease to press for reforms in Turkey and for the improvement of the condition of the Sultan's subjects, because we knew from experience that if we ever relaxed our efforts the Ottoman administration would become more corrupt and the condition of the people more abject and hopeless than it was even now, as he might learn for instance from our blue books on Armenia.

I therefore took this opportunity of renewing to him my earnest appeal to Count Hatzfeldt that he would urge the Sultan through his emissaries Ali and Reschid to send without further delay a governor-general to Armenia, with full powers to improve the condition of the people as recommended by Lord Dufferin and his colleagues.

Prince Bismarck . . . showed himself decidedly opposed to interference and declined for his own part to worry the Sultan by further pressure for improvements, which he maintained did more harm than good. He could not but feel favourably impressed, he said, by the tone and manner of Ali Nizam, a real old soldier and a worthy representative of an old Anatolian family of warriors who had served the Sultan and massacred the Christians in the name of the Prophet for five centuries.

Young Reschid appeared very intelligent and the Sultan had given proof of discrimination in selecting him to accompany Ali Nizam to Berlin.

Prince Bismarck went on to say that the Sultan was a man of character, who knew what he wanted, and how to be master in his own house, and that eternally to lecture such a character was tantamount to humiliating him before his servants and subjects and alienating him from his true friends. To press for administrative reforms which the Turks had not the capacity to carry out, being a military nation and nothing else, was simply playing the Russian game and breaking up the Turkish Empire.

After some further conversation on other subjects I took my leave of Prince Bismarck and in passing through his ante-chamber saw that Reschid Pasha was already waiting to be received.

The impression made on my mind by this conversation with

the German Chancellor is that, after long years of indifference to Eastern affairs, as alien to German interests, he has, under the influence of his new Foreign Secretary, Count Hatzfeldt, who is a Turkophil, been induced to lend an ear to the Sultan's flattering assurances of implicit confidence and unceasing solicitations for advice, with a view to further contingencies, when His Majesty's unsought-for submission may be turned to account to strengthen the influence and swell the voice of the German Chancellor in the European Concert."

Before the visitors departed their activities in trying to persuade German capitalists to form a Bagdad railway company became known. Lord Ampthill's information was that a German proposal that the company should be international was refused as it was the Sultan's object to give the railway concession to Germans alone.

The favour shown to the Porte was clearly meant to be noticed by the other Powers. At the Emperor's New Year's reception "gracious and unusual attention" was shown to the gratified Sadoullah Bey, and solicitous inquiries were made after the health of Abdul Hamid and the return journey of Ali Nazim and Reschid. Shortly afterwards the Emperor's favourite Aide-de-Camp was selected to convey the insignia of the Order of the Black Eagle to the Sultan.

The financial negotiations continued. Early in June 1882 a request was made for a German company to undertake public works in Turkey, and Bleichröder was brought into consultation. The Sultan still seemed to hanker after a purely German company, but Lord Ampthill was informed that Bleichröder thought German capitalists would not support an undertaking unless "it had English and French capital at its disposal."

By the autumn of 1883 the relations between the two countries had developed to such an extent that the Sultan complimented the German army by sending his secretary, Kiazem Bey, and the commander of his army in Asia Minor during the last war, Ghazi Monktar Pasha, to represent him at the autumn manœuvres. Before returning home Ghazi visited the military establishments and barracks of Berlin, and was received by Bismarck as his guest at Friedrichsruhe. Such a show of intimacy caused alarm in the Russian press, and Lord Ampthill drew the attention of H.M.G. to an article on the supposed

overtures of Turkey to Berlin and Vienna for admission to the Austro-German alliance on the basis of the guarantee of Turkish integrity in Asia and Europe, and the failure of these negotiations because Germany, out of deference for Austria's designs on Albania, Macedonia and Salonica, refused this guarantee. This article appeared in the Russian paper, *Nowoji Tronja*, and concluded with the sensational statement that Europe having robbed Turkey of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt and Tunis, England was now, through Lord Dufferin, making overtures to sever Syria and Mesopotamia, and Germany and Austria were urging Russia to annex Armenia, so that union with Russia was Turkey's sole chance of preserving her integrity.<sup>1</sup>

Turkey, indeed, joined no alliance, but these years saw a revolution in the German position at Constantinople and in the Turkish position in Berlin.

## II

The gradual development of Bismarck's Turkish policy forms a background against which his relations with other Powers may be studied. With Russia those relations steadily deteriorated after the Congress, for Bismarck made no attempt to hide his bitterness at the complaints that Russia had been let down at Berlin, and openly said he considered the Tsar guilty of ingratitude. His personal attitude towards Gorchakov has already been noticed, and Hohenlohe's statement on Bismarck's authority that a saloon had always been placed at his disposal in Germany till the summer of 1879, shows that the Chancellor's rancour could still manifest itself in petty annoyances.<sup>2</sup> The general trend of relations was well-known to Lord Odo, but when he returned from leave on 21 October it was to find that Bismarck had ostentatiously avoided Gorchakov and that a secret alliance with Austria had been concluded.

Gorchakov told Russell that the agreement was "the one

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1027. No. 294. To Lord Granville. 20 October 1883. In ridiculing this article the *N.D.A.Z.* said that if the paper still found readers it was a proof that the Russian people were not sufficiently educated in politics to take an active part in affairs.

<sup>2</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 242.



thing" his Government had always desired, but his colleague shrewdly surmised that this was only said in an endeavour to hide his annoyance. The Emperor's reluctance to forsake Russia was fully understood in Berlin, but the popularity of the agreement in all other quarters was a commentary on the state of feeling between the two countries. "Leading politicians tell me," wrote Lord Odo Russell to Salisbury on 24 October, "that Prince Bismarck has done nothing so popular since the establishment of the Empire, as this anti-Russian move in favour of Austria, and that it will render both the Prussian and German Parliaments even more amenable to his wishes."

In November a conversation with St. Vallier, who had just returned from a visit to Varzin, gave Lord Odo a clue to Bismarck's anti-Russian policy.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 26 November 1879.<sup>1</sup>—

"... His Excellency then inquired what the circumstances really were that had 'frightened' His Majesty in regard to the attitude assumed by Russia, and which had necessitated the conclusion of a defensive alliance with Austria.

In reply Prince Bismarck detailed the threatening positions which had been gradually taken up by the Russian army on the German frontier since the Congress of Berlin, and which had become so alarming that he had felt compelled in July last to address a note to the Cabinet of St. Petersburg demanding explanations as to the intentions of the Russian Government.

The Russian Government, His Highness said, had the audacity to reply by an *impudent* 'denial of the facts.'

Prince Bismarck then spoke of General Obrutscheff's secret mission to negotiate an offensive alliance with France, and intimated that he had reason to believe that similar overtures were made at the time to Italy. Other circumstances had also come to his knowledge which imposed the duty on him to seek protection for Germany against Russian intrigues, and which had finally led to the conclusion of a defensive alliance with Austria. He most earnestly hoped that it would have the effect of neutralizing the hostility of Russia and of guaranteeing Austria against an attack which it was the manifest interest of Germany to prevent. . . ."

The explanation that Bismarck had so brusquely thrust

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 936. No. 566.

aside was that the Russian army, being gradually redistributed after the war, had been posted in positions near the frontiers, instead of being buried somewhere in the remote interior of the country. Two days later Moltke also expressed extreme alarm to Lord Odo Russell at a banquet, declaring that three-fourths of the Russian army were massed on the Polish frontier, and three-fourths of the French on the frontier of Lorraine. At any moment he feared that France might unite her newly-organized army and her wealth with Russia's millions of men and attack a Germany made vulnerable by her central position in the midst of armed Powers and by her indefensible frontiers. The uneasiness he felt was not confined to Germany. Only a short time before, on 8 November, the *Times* had uttered the warning: "War and preparation for war are the normal condition of the civilized world . . . men have made up their minds that the nations are waiting their opportunity to snatch what they can from each other."

While Bismarck was still brooding over Russia, Prince Gorchakov once more passed through Berlin on his way to St. Petersburg. He was cordially received by the imperial family, but Bismarck contented himself with sending his polite regrets that the state of his health prevented him from coming to see him. When Gorchakov met Lord Odo he showed no sign of annoyance, and was effusive about Lord Dufferin's success at St. Petersburg.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck's illness was not severe enough to prevent him from receiving Lord Dufferin and Shuvalov at Varzin a few weeks later when they in their turn passed through Berlin, only warning them that they would see "an invalid country squire in his dressing-gown."<sup>2</sup>

Russia lay heavily on the mind of the Emperor William that winter. In January 1880 he talked a great deal about her to Hohenlohe, and tried to throw the blame of the tension on Milutin. Lord Odo noticed, too, that the place of Gorchakov in the Chancellor's thoughts was also occupied by Milutin, for Bismarck said that the Tsar no longer ruled Russia, but that the Pan-Slavs shared the power between them, and that Milutin did what he pleased with the army, while Louis Melikoff had

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 936. No. 275. To Lord Salisbury. 1 December 1879.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 936. No. 608. To Lord Salisbury. 14 December 1879.

a free hand in internal affairs.<sup>1</sup> But this was the moment when the army bill was before the house, and it was not to Bismarck's interest to express confidence in the international situation.

Yet the Tsar seemed to be anxious to bring relations back to normal. He recalled Oubril from Berlin, and appointed Saburov, who was known to be *persona grata* to Bismarck and Radowitz, in his stead. He came full of ideas and suggestions for an agreement, but until the army bill was through the press continued to thunder against Russia and her military preparations. By the end of March, the army bill safely through, Bismarck professed to be rather more hopeful about the prospects of peace, not that he trusted Russia and France any more, but now the army bill was passed, he felt that Germany was ready for any attack.

The unexpected triumph of Gladstone in the General Election of 1880 was a factor in international affairs with which Bismarck now had to reckon. Lord Odo, in a private letter to Lord Granville, while expressing his own happiness in his post, frankly admitted that the Conservatives would be regretted in Berlin, adding diplomatically that Bismarck was reassured on hearing of Granville's appointment to the Foreign Office. The change of government in England may have helped him to decide that the time was ripe to mend the line to St. Petersburg. The new Ambassador, Saburov, found him more approachable than he had been for many a long day to Oubril, and both Lord Odo and St. Vallier noticed how pleased he was with his reception. The refusal of the French Government to extradite Hartmann was another link in the chain of reconciliation, proving as it did that there was no question of a secret agreement between Russia and France. As St. Vallier shrewdly observed, "It was a new situation to be studied with care and carefully watched."<sup>2</sup>

When Gorchakov came to Berlin in June, Bismarck no longer avoided him. Lord Odo Russell found him as cheerful as ever, breathing the most pacific sentiments, and full of eulogy of Lord Dufferin.

*To Lord Granville.* 2 June<sup>1</sup> 1880.—

"... But what most particularly gratified him was to find that

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 146. To Lord Salisbury. Secret. 25 March 1880.

<sup>2</sup>D.D.F. III. 76.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 960. No. 239.

'his old friend Bismarck' had got over his fit of ill-humour towards Russia, and was now again inclined and willing to re-establish those confidential relations with Russia, which had formerly prevailed to the benefit of both countries and which it was the manifest interest of Germany and Russia to maintain in the future. . . ."

In August Saburov astounded Hohenlohe by announcing that Russell had proposed an Anglo-Russian understanding on the basis that Russia should leave the Straits open if England would prevent Austria from occupying Salonica.<sup>1</sup> Hohenlohe's astonishment was justified, for Saburov appears to have fathered on his British colleague a proposal the exact reverse of one which Lord Odo himself reported as the irresponsible view of the Austrian Crown Prince.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 17 September 1880.<sup>2</sup>—

"... The utterances of the Crown Prince of Austria are perhaps of no real importance, but it is well to place on record that the future ruler of the Austrian Empire expressed confidentially his private opinion to his friends in Berlin, that the possession of Salonica might compensate Austria for the preponderance of Russia at Constantinople. . . ."

Milutin still seemed to be the scapegoat in German eyes. The Emperor confided to Lord Odo Russell his fears that Russian policy was no longer dominated by the Tsar, but by the Pan-Slavs. When he had written to the Tsar expressing his concern at Russian policy in Bulgaria, he had been reassured with promises, and when he had further asked him for an explanation of the arrival of soldiers and war material in Bulgaria, he had replied that he himself did not believe in the reports, but that positive orders would be given that such attempts should not be tolerated.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 18 August 1880.<sup>3</sup>—

"... I am bound, the Emperor said, to believe in the word of my nephew, the Czar, but what I suspect and fear is that Milutin is acting with the Panslavists behind His Majesty's back.

<sup>1</sup>G.P. III. p.148.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 430.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 370.

The Czar's orders, I said, would surely not be disregarded by General Milutin?

The Emperor replied that they would doubtless have the effect of arresting for the present the proceedings of the Panslavists, but he believed himself that the unification of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia would be attempted in the future by the Panslavists and that the European Powers would have sooner or later to deal with that question.

I said that it was a question much dreaded in Austria.

The Emperor replied that he had told the Emperor at Ischl what he had just told me, but that although His Majesty listened with interest, he appeared embarrassed and made no reply. His Majesty added that he was at a loss to explain the Austrian Emperor's silence, whom he had otherwise found as communicative and cordial as ever. . . ."

The following day Prince Hohenlohe dined with the Russells at their Potsdam villa. With the Emperor's fears in his mind, but without mentioning them, Lord Odo Russell asked Hohenlohe what impression he had of the Bulgarian situation. His reply was that the assurances of the Tsar were to be relied upon for the moment, but that the question together with other problems would have to be faced later, "these were however questions of the future, which the Powers would have time to consider."<sup>1</sup> A few days later the Emperor again returned to the subject at Babelsberg, saying the Tsar knew more than he would admit, regretfully refusing to accept Lord Odo's suggestion that he himself was deceived."<sup>2</sup>

During October, while Hohenlohe was absent from Berlin, and the diffident Limburg-Stirum's extreme reserve was making it very difficult for the diplomatic body to get any information, Lord Odo Russell became acquainted from a private informant with the substance of a report by Bismarck to the Emperor on foreign affairs, in which he visualized the collapse of the Concert owing to lack of British leadership.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 2 October 1880.<sup>3</sup>—

"... Russia might be tempted to interfere singly herself again on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Sultan. . . . Germany

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 961. No. 370. P.S. dated 20 August 1880. To Lord Granville.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 416. Secret. 5 September 1880.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 455.

while maintaining a neutral attitude, should then use her good offices to harmonize the interests of Austria with those of Russia in Turkey and prevent a conflict between them.

Prince Bismarck is of opinion that it would be easier to negotiate successfully with Russia during the lifetime of the present Czar, who is personally well-disposed to Germany, than later on when his successor is on the throne, whose tendencies are reported to be Panslavistic and anti-German.

The first condition that Germany and Russia should insist upon, should be that the conveyance of troops should take place exclusively by sea, and that under no circumstances should Russian troops be allowed to pass through Roumania. This condition should tend to localize the war and would be a great relief to Austria as well as to Roumania who should be called upon to share the neutrality of Austria and her ally Germany.

While the conflict lasted Germany would have nothing herself to apprehend from Russia or from France who would not risk a war of revenge without an ally. . . ."

The negotiations that Bismarck thought would be more successful with Alexander than with his son had already begun, though to outward seeming relations were still far from cordial. In December Saburov was very graciously received at Friedrichsruhe.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 31 December 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

" . . . M. de Saburov . . . described Prince Bismarck as having also said playfully to him, that if Russia were not satisfied with diplomatic pressure only and wished to adopt an active policy in Turkey, why did she not come to some understanding with England in the matter while the Liberals were in office, who were friendly to Russia and well disposed to act in concert with the Powers most interested in Eastern affairs.

On M. de Saburov replying that he was glad to conclude from Prince Bismarck's advice that he did not, as the German press insinuated, object to an Anglo-Russian alliance, His Highness had cynically remarked that his only fear was that an Anglo-Russian alliance would not last as long as he wished himself, because Russia was certain to quarrel with England about Constantinople before long.

M. de Saburov said that he had protested against this humorous insinuation, but that he mentioned the anecdote to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 963. No. 600.

me simply to show that Prince Bismarck was more cheerfully disposed in talking over Eastern affairs than people gave him credit for in Berlin.

He had further explained to Prince Bismarck that Russia was suffering too much from financial and social troubles to be individually very enterprising abroad, but would certainly adhere faithfully to the concerted action of the Powers which she had so often invoked in vain, and was therefore now the more anxious to give her best support to. . . ."

These remarks do not ring very true, Saburov had been negotiating a very different agreement at Friedrichsruhe, and even when he returned from Russia shortly after he announced that he had not brought back "any special news," except that he had met with Oubril to explore the possibilities of allaying Austrian suspicions of Russian Eastern policy. Russia wanted peace, and although Austria would never consider a Russian alliance he hoped practical relations might be established, "unhampered by groundless suspicions—and in seeking to arrive at this end, he believed that Russia had the cordial approval of Prince Bismarck."<sup>1</sup> On the very day that he was talking like this to Russell, he was writing to Bismarck, "The letter of M. de Giers gave me the impression of a veritable Allelluya. . . ."<sup>2</sup> So far advanced were the Russo-German negotiations.

The agreement was practically ready for signature, when the courts of Europe were thrown into mourning and apprehension by the cruel murder of the Tsar Alexander II. The new Emperor had the reputation of being anti-German, but he was even more anti-democratic, and the tragic circumstances in which he ascended the throne inclined him to embrace any means that might strengthen his position. He therefore hastened to show himself willing to proceed with the work his father had almost completed, and although the negotiations were prolonged until the summer, the agreement finally received the imperial sanction on 28 June 1881. The terms, which remained a dead secret, were naturally quite unknown to the British Ambassador, who, when it was actually signed, was taking the waters at Carlsbad. Returning at the end of August he found the Liberal papers bewildered by the revival of the Drei-Kaiserbund, and appre-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 979. No. 20. To Lord Granville. Secret. 14 January 1881.

<sup>2</sup>G.P. III. p.156.

hensive lest it foreboded a period of reaction. Lord Ampthill himself thought its object was to isolate France once for all.<sup>1</sup>

An interview took place at Dantzic in September between the new Tsar, accompanied by Giers, and the Emperor William, accompanied by Bismarck. Special interest was centred in the long conversation that the Tsar held with Bismarck. It was suggested that he had come hither at the request of Alexander, who wanted his advice on the question of the internal reorganization of Russia. In the interviews between Giers and Bismarck it was supposed that the two statesmen had explored the means of grappling with the dangers of international socialism and of revolutionary movements.<sup>2</sup>

Distrusting Bismarck and regarding him as cunning and tricky there was a strong anti-German party in Russia led by the popular general Skobelov and the Panslav Ignatyev. Skobelov took the opportunity of a Paris speech to attack the German policy of the Government, and everybody wondered how Bismarck would react. To the surprise of all, including his indignant master, he refused to attach much importance to it, only turning it to account by inquiring "if it had any connection with the secret conveyance of arms and ammunition from Russia up the Danube to Servia for Bosnia, and whether the Russian Government would put a stop to these Panslavistic proceedings."<sup>3</sup> With the future of the army assured by the army bill of the previous year, with an alliance with Austria and a reinsurance treaty with Russia, Bismarck could put the incident in its true perspective. The Emperor felt otherwise, and was upset that the Tsar had not made an example of Skobelov. He felt so strongly about it that he called on Bismarck, who was ill, and asked if he should write to the Tsar. The Chancellor, never very prone to encourage imperial correspondence, advised him to do no such thing, urging that the best course was to let the matter fade away without giving it international importance. The Emperor, displeased and agitated, only decided unwillingly to follow this unwelcome advice.<sup>4</sup>

Bismarck's calmness led Lord Ampthill to discount a violent

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 983. No. 391. To Lord Granville. Secret. 17 September 1881.

<sup>2</sup>D.D.F. IV. 119-120.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 31. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 3 February 1882.

<sup>4</sup>F.O. 64. 1005. No. 95. To Lord Granville. Very Confidential. 18 March 1882.



press campaign that broke out about the same time against Ignatyev. He insisted that Bismarck meant peaceful relations with Russia and that the objection to Ignatyev was personal.

*To Lord Granville.* Very Confidential. 11 March 1882.<sup>1</sup>—  
“ . . . The strength of General Ignatyev’s position with the Czar is due no doubt to the fact that he has for the present turned the stream of Nihilism into the channel of Panslavism and that while they both think they are flowing towards the promised land of national regeneration, the Czar’s life is comparatively safe.

If, however, the flow meets with impediments, or dykes break and inundations threaten and that the leaders of the Russian movement have to choose between revolution at home or war abroad, Prince Bismarck will certainly exercise his influence to support the principle of monarchy in Russia and will avoid a conflict with Russia, and if Russia is driven by events into war, he will certainly exercise his influence to keep Germany out of it, by urging Russia into a war of distant conquest as he urged France to conquer Tunis.

Prince Bismarck is however not in the least apprehensive of war and says himself that the Powers were never more pacific than under the present order of things in Europe. . . .”

Relations between Russia and Germany were cordial enough for Giers to be invited to Bismarck’s “Pomeranian Tusculum” as he was passing through Germany in November on his way to visit his daughter who was ill in Italy. He told Lord Ampthill he had found Bismarck very well in health and spirits, and “deeply interested in agricultural pursuits for the improvement of his Pomeranian estates.” He was confident of Bismarck’s peaceful intentions. He was not so communicative about the other object of his visit, which was to make financial approaches to the leading German bankers.<sup>2</sup> After he had left there were sensational press rumours that he had endeavoured to sow dissension between England and Germany, rumours which Lord Ampthill denied after making careful inquiries.<sup>3</sup>

Suddenly the flowing tide of cordiality received a set-back,

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.* No. 84.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1008. No. 421. To Lord Granville. Confidential. 22 November 1882.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* 430. To Lord Granville. 30 November 1882.

and a scare arose over Russian armaments. Lord Ampthill believed this scare was inspired by Bismarck's anxiety to induce the Reichstag to vote increased army estimates.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 19 December 1882.<sup>1</sup>—

"... The military authorities have long since called Prince Bismarck's attention to the defenceless state of the N.E. frontier of Germany and to the want of barracks and strategical railways to lodge and convey the number of men required to resist an invasion in case of war.

The Chancellor, who believes in peace with Russia since he wishes himself for it—hesitated before yielding to the importunities of Field Marshal Moltke and the great general staff, principally because he knew that the sums he required would be refused by Parliament, but since his former secretary Herr v. Tiedemann has been appointed governor of the frontier provinces, and has reported to him that Russian soldiers cross and recross the German frontier daily and that a hostile force can cross the frontier unopposed and occupy Bromberg and Thorn in a few hours, he had agreed to support the demands of the military authorities and to lay them before Parliament. 'But before doing so,' he said to a friend: 'We must begin by rattling our swords, otherwise members will never vote the sums we require.'"

So revolved wheels within wheels, Bismarck determined on the one hand not to expose Germany to a war with Russia, but never allowing public feeling to become lulled as to its possibility. The following October the Press was again full of war rumours, relieved for once by a slight and much-needed touch of humour. The *Times*, on 18 October 1883, commented that Saburov, having sold his horses, the *Cologne Gazette* might think it proved that he was to be recalled and war declared immediately. "I am happy to be in a position to explain," wrote Lord Ampthill in jocular mood, "that the able representative of Russia is as determined as the German Chancellor himself to promote and retain peace between Russia and Germany, and that the horses he sold consist in a single pony which I bought for my children when M. de Saburov's son left Berlin for school in Russia."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1008. No. 474.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1027. No. 296. To Lord Granville. 21 October 1883.

While the press was still in an inflammable state Giers once more visited Berlin, and Lord Ampthill reported that Bismarck was anxious to avoid friction as far as possible.

*To Lord Granville.* Confidential. 17 November 1883.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Although Prince Bismarck has perfect confidence in the peaceful assurances of the Czar and of M. de Giers, he does not feel sure of the latter's tenure of office, and apprehends that his successors may, if they should be Panslavists, exercise an influence on the Czar which might weaken His Majesty's present friendly disposition towards Germany.

Prince Bismarck hopes that by strengthening M. de Giers' position he may prolong his official existence.

It would appear that the gradual movement of troops from the interior of Russia to the western frontier which is giving so much umbrage to the military authorities in Germany and Austria, is due to the Russian Minister of War, General Obrutscheff,<sup>2</sup> who is, rightly or wrongly, suspected here—not only of being a Panslavist, but of harbouring also strong sympathies for a French alliance. . . ."

This winter it became apparent to Lord Ampthill that Saburov no longer enjoyed the confidence of Bismarck, who was beginning to drop hints that good Russian relations would be improved by the appointment of a new ambassador. Lord Ampthill knew he would have liked Shuvalov, but since that was not possible, Count Herbert Bismarck suggested to the Tsar the transfer of Prince Orlov from Paris. This appointment marked the success of Russian policy in establishing financial relations with Germany, as Saburov's had been made to bring about the political agreement. Its firstfruits were the floating of a Russian loan in Berlin of £15,000,000, £10,000,000 to be provided by Bleichröder, and the remainder reserved for the Russian Imperial Bank. The loan was described as a consolidated railway loan, and the negotiations had been actually begun during Giers's last visit to Berlin. It was floated in connection

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1027. No. 308.

<sup>2</sup>A few days later Lord Ampthill corrected his slip in calling Obrutscheff Minister for War (he was only acting Minister) and explained his pro-French sympathies by saying they were generally attributed to his French wife. 23 November 1883.

with the Royal "Seehandlung Societät," an institution under the immediate control of the Russian Finance Minister.

When Lord Ampthill died in August, Bismarck had secured the "good seat" of his jest. His influence was waxing in Constantinople, he had bound Austria to Germany by a secret alliance and yet had restored the line to Russia. While working for this result he was all the time preparing the ground for a new policy, suited to the needs of the time, elsewhere.

### III

On 2 March 1879 Bismarck confided to Lord Odo Russell that Germany's Austrian sympathies had increased owing to Count Andrassy's friendly policy towards Germany, thus leading the British Ambassador to infer that he was seeking to promote the extension of Austrian influence over European Turkey, but within a few weeks a passing cloud was in the sky.<sup>1</sup>

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 16 April 1879.<sup>2</sup>—

"... Prince Bismarck, who, in conversation with diplomatists has been unusually reserved of late on foreign policy, spoke a few nights since with unwonted freedom on some of the questions of the day to a friend, who confided to me what follows.

... Andrassy's head had been turned by his success at the Congress and by his intimacy with England.

His success in securing Bosnia for Austria at the Congress had confirmed him in his belief that he can effect in the future further occupations in Turkey with equal success.

Andrassy... was so bent on an occupation policy that in pressing him, Bismarck, four times to support an Austrian part-occupation of Eastern Roumelia he had shown both a considerable want of skill and of tact for he had shown his cards to Russia and had offended him, Bismarck, by his importunities.

Andrassy ought to have known better. He might be an orator and even a lawyer, but he was not a statesman, as his attempts to emancipate himself from the Drei-Kaiserbund sufficiently proved. . . ."

<sup>1</sup>It was at this time that Bismarck said that partial disarmament was impossible, Germany having "to show front in four directions and able to trust none of her neighbours." *Annual Register* 1879 p.168.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 932. No. 210.

Bismarck's irritation did not last. In September the papers were enlarging on the importance of Austro-German relations just at the time when he himself was paying a widely-advertised visit to Vienna, and before long it was common knowledge that an agreement had been signed between the two countries, the nature of which was not disclosed, the Austrian Ambassador himself not being let into the secret. He told Lord Odo that he felt so annoyed about it that he meant to ask for leave to go to Vienna and fathom the mystery for himself.

The news, despite its vague nature, and although it was known that the Emperor had been reluctant to follow Bismarck's policy, was intensely popular, but the agreement had hastened the end of one of Bismarck's most able lieutenants. At the funeral of Bülow, which took place soon after Lord Odo Russell's return to Berlin, the Ambassador heard from a friend to his grief and concern that his illness had been mainly due to worry caused by his labours to reconcile the Emperor to the Alliance. He had been summoned to Gastein while in a very weak state of health at Marienbad, and against his own convictions instructed to convert the Emperor to a belief in the necessity of an Austrian Alliance. "He carried out his orders," said Lord Odo, "but the effort cost him his life."<sup>1</sup>

The importance of the step, which indicated a regrouping of the Powers, was fully commented upon by Lord Odo Russell, who summarized his reading of its background.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Secret. 21 November 1879.<sup>2</sup>—

"... On returning to Berlin I reported to Your Lordship my impression that the Austro-German Alliance was popular throughout Germany.

That impression has since been confirmed by conversations with German politicians of all parties, and I notice that even Prince Bismarck's opponents admit that he has strengthened his position and increased the votes of his parliamentary majority by selecting Austria in preference to Russia as the favoured ally of Germany.

An Austro-German Alliance is welcomed by all, not only as a guarantee of peace and safety for Germany, but also as a step towards the much-desired Customs Union which is to

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 935. No. 517. To Lord Salisbury. 24 October 1879.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 936. No. 557.

promote the commercial enterprise and prosperity of both countries.

Prince Bismarck's friends say that while he was cutting Austria adrift from the Confederation to assert the supremacy of Prussia in Germany, the intention to make a future ally of Austria was already in his mind, and it was to facilitate an early realization of that intention that he so strenuously resisted his Royal Master's desire to annex the conquered kingdom of Bohemia during the peace negotiations which followed the Seven Weeks' War of 1866.

His policy proved successful, for in less than six years, in September 1872, the Emperor Francis Joseph accepted an invitation to Berlin for the purpose of establishing intimate relations with Germany—which the unexpected arrival of the Tsar, who came self-invited from Livadia, at Prince Gorchakov's instigation, transformed into the tri-partite Alliance or Drei-Kaiserbund. The scare of 1875 estranged the two chancellors and the support given to England and Austria during the Congress in 1878 called forth in Russia that irritation and hostility which enabled Prince Bismarck to extort the Emperor William's consent to his long-cherished plan of an intimate alliance with Austria which he successfully negotiated in Vienna in September, but which the Emperor William only reluctantly ratified on the 14 October last at Baden.

In regard to the probable effects of the new combination, opinion is divided—some think it will lead to a lasting estrangement, some to the renewal of improved relations with Russia.

The visit of the Czarevitch and Czarena and of the Grand Duke Vladimir to the German Emperor is looked upon as a first attempt towards reconciliation—but there is in reality no danger of a quarrel between the reigning families of Germany and Russia while the Emperor William lives, even though there may be little prospect of improved relations between the two governments while Prince Gorchakov remains in office.

In the event however of the latter being replaced by a more congenial chancellor, as [for instance, by Count Shuvalov, the relations between Russia and Germany might speedily become more intimate, and the Drei-Kaiserbund be re-established on a firmer basis than heretofore. It is already rumoured that a change of ambassadors is in contemplation, and that my Russian colleague, M. d'Oubril, who has been summoned by the Czar to St. Petersburg, will be replaced by an agent specially selected to regain Prince Bismarck's lost confidence.

Prince Bismarck himself avowed to the French Ambassador at Varzin that the '*written agreement*' he had concluded with the Austrian Government at Vienna, and which he described as a defensive alliance against Russia had been communicated by himself to the Russian Government, and that it had not, to his great satisfaction, been ill-received either at Livadia or at St. Petersburg.

He made use of the same expression employed by Karolyi in speaking with Your Lordship to the effect that he had proposed a defensive alliance to Austria in consequence of his having become 'frightened' at the attitude of the Russian Government—but that he hoped that the counter-attitude assumed by Austria and Germany would have the effect of bringing Russia back to reason and moderation.

He, Prince Bismarck, Count St. Vallier told me in strict confidence, expressed both regret and alarm at the pressure recently put by England on Turkey, because it might, he feared, have the effect of frightening the Sultan into seeking protection at the hands of Russia, and of encouraging Russia to make the most of the Sultan's dread of the British fleet which might ultimately bring the Austro-German agreement into play—a contingency he most particularly wished to avoid, as his object was to arrest the mad course of Russia by a firm but conciliatory attitude, and not, if possible, by force of arms.

Germany and Austria, Prince Bismarck said, wanted peace as much as France and England, whilst Russia and Italy wanted war—the former to wipe out the humiliation she felt at having been compelled to relinquish Constantinople—the latter to acquire territory and importance.

He, Prince Bismarck, was in possession of proofs that Russia sought alliances to enable her to attack both Austria and Germany, but the measures he had taken, and was about to take would, he confidently hoped, avert the dangers that had rendered a defensive alliance with Austria so necessary to both empires.

In conclusion Count St. Vallier told me that he had left Varzin thoroughly satisfied with Prince Bismarck's assurances of friendship for M. Waddington and of sympathy for the cordial agreement existing between France and England which he called the basis of peace in Europe.

In regard to the Austro-German defensive alliance M. de St. Vallier agreed with me that it would not only have the effect desired by Prince Bismarck, of averting an attack by Russia on Germany, but probably also of re-establishing the old relations

of friendship which have so long subsisted between Berlin and St. Petersburg. . . .”

The terms of the treaty continued a profound secret. The Austrian military attaché, Prince Lichstenstein, after a fruitless six weeks' visit to Vienna, confided to Lord Methuen, the British attaché, that he thought they were only known to the Emperor, the Prime Minister and Minister for War. He did not think the alliance would be much use to Austria, and expressed the surprising view that the same friendship for Austria as for Russia had never existed, nor could Austria forget that all her misfortunes were due to Germany. Lord Methuen felt bound, in reporting this conversation, to impress upon his chief that he had formed a very different opinion of the relations between the three countries. Lord Odo Russell gave his own reading of the situation a few days later.

*To Lord Salisbury.* Confidential. 19 December 1879.—

“... This opinion [that Germany might use the alliance to attack France] is held by the great majority of German politicians, members of parliament, military and literary men, journalists etc. etc.

They say: Sooner or later a war between Germany and France and between Germany and Russia is inevitable. Knowing this, Prince Bismarck has secured the alliance of Austria, who can keep Russia in check while Germany beats France.

France beaten, can be squared with a slice of Belgium, Germany can then unite with Austria to vanquish Russia and take from her a sufficient amount of territory to make a scientific frontier, which Germany requires for her own future security. Berlin is at present in an exposed position, being too near the Russian frontier. The annexation of a portion of the Baltic provinces would add to the security of the German Empire etc.

I mention these popular aspirations of the Germans without attaching any real importance to them because I am convinced that Prince Bismarck's real object is not to quarrel or go to war with Russia, but on the contrary to compel her by temporary isolation to reflect and re-enter the *Drei-Kaiserbund* on his own terms and not on those of Prince Gorchakov which have more or less prevailed since 1875.

While in Berlin Count Shuvalov in confidential conversation



with foreign diplomats deprecated any attempt on the part of Russia to re-enter the *Drei-Kaiserlund* and spoke strongly of the advantages to Russia of an alliance with England, which he declared he would do his utmost to promote.

He argued that as Russia could not guarantee the possession of the Slav provinces to Austria she could not be a party to the Austro-German Vienna agreement, whilst Germany and Austria could offer Russia no guarantee she stood in need of.

He insinuated to the French Ambassador that the Austro-German defensive alliance was aimed at France quite as much as at Russia, and cautioned him against surprises. . . ."

The economic agreement with Austria did not materialize, but a year later, in spite of his disappointment with Haymerle, Lord Odo Russell was convinced that Bismarck's pro-Austrian policy in the East was now firmly rooted.<sup>1</sup> When, however, Gorchakov at length retired and was replaced by the far more acceptable Giers, a statesman who realized the importance of good relations with Germany, Bismarck showed that it was no part of his policy to estrange Russia altogether. Giers visited Friedrichsruhe and was well received, but when he obviously avoided Vienna on his way to Rome, the Austrian papers took alarm, which Bismarck took pains to allay by inspired articles emphasizing the importance of the Austrian alliance.<sup>2</sup> But the excitement in Germany was growing, and when Count Herbert Bismarck paid a mysterious visit to Vienna, rumour connected it with "negotiations of so secret a nature that the ordinary channels of diplomacy could not be used," and it was not until the Government issued an authoritative statement that the tension subsided.

While the negotiations for the renewal of the Austro-German treaty, due to expire on 24 October 1884, were proceeding, the French feared that Bismarck was working against her. Although Lord Ampthill discounted those fears, pointing out that the present weak republic suited Bismarck, the Emperor William was in fact trying to add to the protection of Germany by persuading Austria to guarantee her against a French attack, though his efforts were in vain.<sup>3</sup> Waddington, in Berlin, deter-

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 600. To Lord Granville. Secret. 31 December 1880.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1008. No. 466. To Lord Granville. 15 December 1882.

<sup>3</sup>G.P. III. p.256. The Treaty was extended in March 1883 for another period of five years.

mined to find out what was in Bismarck's mind. He only succeeded in annoying him.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 16 May 1883.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Prince Bismarck told me to-day in confidence that M. Waddington had cross-questioned him about the Triple Alliance in a manner that he could not call otherwise than indiscreet. He disliked being questioned and M. Waddington might have known better, considering how much he, Prince Bismarck, suffered from 'tic douloureux.' I replied that after what he had said I would certainly not be guilty of the indiscretion of adding a question of mine to those of the French Ambassador to Russia, much as I should have liked to know how he had answered M. Waddington.

Prince Bismarck then went on to say that he had replied in general terms that the 'triple alliance was more a situation than a treaty'<sup>2</sup>—Germany wished for the peaceful maintenance of the *status quo* in Europe, and therefore offered a friendly hand to Italy to keep her dynasty in the saddle. Austria did the same. A revolution in Italy followed by a republic would neither suit Germany nor Austria or be conducive to general peace, and to keep the Italian dynasty in the saddle friendly alliances were essential, which would promote the respect and confidence of the people in their sovereign and in their constitution.

It was the same with France. The people of France had selected the republican form of government and were satisfied with it—and a change from the republican to any other form of government could only be effected by revolution and bloodshed, for which reason he hoped that France would adhere to her present form of government which satisfied her, and under which he sincerely hoped she might prosper and cultivate the arts of peace and the friendship of her neighbours. . . .

Prince Bismarck then turned to other subjects and seeing that he put his hand to his suffering cheek, I was careful not to question him any farther.

I may add that a person who is in a position to know the truth, but whom I am not at liberty to name, confided to me a few days ago that he had seen the original draft of the celebrated treaty of October 1879 signed by Prince Bismarck and Count Andrassy at Vienna, and ratified at Baden by the German Emperor on the 18th October 1879. My informant stated that

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1025. No. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Italy had joined the Austro-German Alliance on 20 May 1882.

according to the terms of the treaty Germany engages to assist Austria if attacked by Russia or Italy—whilst Austria engages to assist Germany if attacked by Russia or by France.

If it be true that Italy has joined the Austro-German Alliance the three Powers would be bound to assist each other against any aggressive movement on the part of France or Russia.

This would be a step towards the realization of Prince Bismarck's idea of a 'peace league' of European Powers.

I have heard it mentioned that the Sultan is anxious to become a member of it. . . ."

On 27 March 1884 the Drei-Kaiserbund, like the Triple Alliance, was prolonged for a further three years. Under the protection of his European alliances, Bismarck could see his way more clearly towards his colonial policy, and of those alliances the Austrian agreement was the corner-stone.

#### IV

The year 1878 saw a great improvement in Franco-German relations. St. Vallier was determined to represent a policy of peace and nothing else at Berlin, and as long as he was the Ambassador relations were not likely to become so strained as they had often been in the time of the unfortunate Gontaut-Biron. Bismarck showed his approbation in many marked ways, and the Count was more than once honoured with an invitation to Varzin, though on the occasion of the Austrian treaty of 1879 he found the Chancellor as inaccessible as the other ambassadors. In November he visited Bismarck, and as soon as possible after his return—he was at first laid up with a bad cold, the weather being unusually severe—he gave his impressions to Lord Odo Russell. With great openness he had discussed all the questions of the day, and showed a sincere desire to be accommodating in the problems still to be solved in connection with the Congress. It was therefore with much regret that Berlin heard that the popular ambassador was thinking of asking to be placed *en disponibilité* on the resignation of M. Waddington. The German Government lost no time in establishing friendly relations with the new Freycinet Government, and St. Vallier consented to remain for the time being. His conditions were,

he told Lord Odo, the free exercise of his senatorial vote in internal affairs, and before he went to Paris to explain his attitude to Freycinet he saw Bismarck to lay before him, too, the dangers of inflammatory speeches during the discussions on the new army bill.

These representations were graciously received, and at the beginning of March relations were so cordial that on the anniversary of the triumphant march of the German troops into Paris in 1871, the Emperor and Empress honoured him by their presence at a dinner. The next day the Parisian citizen was able to read in his paper not only the bill of fare, but also to study the plan of the dinner table, and even the table-talk of the illustrious guests was not withheld from him. He was assured that the Emperor himself, in a loud voice, had expressed cordial sentiments towards France, and that the dreaded Chancellor had sent a personal message of regret by his son, Herbert, that he was unable to be present himself. The success of the party elated the Ambassador, and he confided to Lord Odo that when the army bill had passed he intended to give a similar party to Moltke, Kamecke and the other leading military authorities.

Time after time during the early months of 1880 Lord Odo Russell observed that the French Government took the precaution of consulting the German Government confidentially before committing themselves on questions of foreign policy, and that Bismarck showed a strong inclination to meet French wishes, and to be as conciliatory as possible,<sup>1</sup> but the summer saw a recurrence of the all-too-familiar Franco-German tension. Gambetta's influence was rising in France, and although in June it had been decided to discontinue the celebrations of the anniversary of Sedan, after Gambetta had made a provocative speech at Cherbourg, it did not seem so necessary to study French susceptibilities, and Bismarck thought that it should be answered by "outbursts of military enthusiasm throughout the Empire." The Emperor whole-heartedly agreed, immediately issuing a proclamation written in his own hand authorizing the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the battle, which was received with acclamation. Gambetta's fiery tongue was doing ill-service to those who were working for better relations with

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 960. No. 219. To Lord Granville. 21 May 1880.

Bismarck. It seemed to Lord Odo Russell that its evil effects were leading to a suspicion and hatred that he could only compare to the pathological state of mind that had led to the "scare" of 1875.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 17 September 1880.<sup>1</sup>—

"... M. Gambetta's allusion to a war of revenge was answered by the celebration of the anniversary of Sedan. The comments and recriminations of the Press followed, and then came Herr von Varnbühler's speech to his electors at Ludwigslust in which he explained his vote in favour of an increase of the army by reviving the assertion that Germany was threatened by a Franco-Russian alliance—which has not been officially contradicted.

The impression here is that M. Gambetta has commenced an agitation which is to place him on the presidential chair of France, when he will support Russia and England in the East to the detriment of Austria, and consequently of her ally Germany. . . ."

A week later he was even more apprehensive.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 23 September 1880.<sup>2</sup>—

"... I regret to say that the distrust of France is increasing in high and military circles.

Strange to say the feeling partakes almost of the nature of alarm and the Emperor, the Crown Prince and the leading military authorities talk with apprehension of the larger number of men and war material which M. Gambetta has at his disposal, as compared with the present number of men and war material Germany could oppose to those of France.

Happily Field Marshal Count Moltke has not, as in 1875, the wish to take the initiative before the French are ready for war—1st because the German military authorities are under an impression that the French are ready, and

2nd, because they do not believe that M. Gambetta would risk a war of revenge single-handed and without an ally, and

3rd, because they think that Germany has it in her power to buy off Russia, the only ally France could hope to find, by compensations at the expense of Turkey.

There is reason to think that these views are shared by

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 430.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 439.

Prince Bismarck, and we must therefore be prepared, now that a settlement of Eastern affairs is again occupying the anxious attention of Europe, to see him seek to secure the alliance of Russia and re-establish the *Drei-Kaiserbund*, if the European Concert should fail to compel the Porte to carry out the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin. . . .”

St. Vallier did his utmost to nullify the harm that Gambetta was doing, and continued to consult Bismarck. In the following February, when the French were engaged in their Tunis policy, he had a very secret interview to ask Bismarck’s advice about the difficulty which had arisen with Britain. Private though the meeting was, it came to Lord Odo Russell’s ears that it had taken place, and that Bismarck had recommended France on no account to quarrel with her neighbour, but even, if necessary, to submit the matter to arbitration,<sup>1</sup> but the question continued to remain acute. It caused a little storm in a tea-cup in Berlin, when the French Government accused persons unknown of making representations against them in the name of the British Government. As Lord Ampthill was the only person authorized to speak thus, he made inquiries of the Foreign Minister as to whether anyone at any time had done such a thing, and received the answer, “Never.”<sup>2</sup>

The French Documents seem to give a clue to this queer story. In a long conversation with St. Vallier, Bismarck vividly described an attempt made the previous August by Lord Dufferin to persuade him to support mediation in the Tunis affair. “Of course I abruptly rebuffed the overture.” This tale caused great annoyance to Barthélémy St. Hilaire, who unfolded it to the French Ambassador as a proof of England’s secret ill-will. Challemal-Lacour, only half believing it, expressed regret to Sir Charles Dilke that an attempt at mediation should have been made by so devious a course.<sup>3</sup> If Sir Charles Dilke’s emphatic denial is to be believed, the whole incident was only a mare’s nest.

French policy at this time made St. Vallier wring his hands in despair. Her ancient traditions of glorious memory were being trampled in the dust by feeble politicians who did not even seem

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 980. No. 88. To Lord Granville. Secret. 18 February 1881.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 981. No. 254. 10 May 1881.

<sup>3</sup>D.D.F. III. 471. 506.

to realize that they were alienating half Europe, and that for no real policy dictated by her interests. In July he wrote to his chief in sorrow and anger that Turkey, Italy, Spain and England were all hostile, and that this was the moment when the French Government could think of nothing better than to arouse the suspicions of Bismarck by building new fortifications along the frontier, as a last affront, following provocative speeches, gross indiscretions in Alsace-Lorraine, and popular anti-German demonstrations in a large town. "Why?" he asked sadly, "after waiting eleven years to raise these fortifications must they be put in hand now, just when Bismarck's support is vital to us?"<sup>1</sup> It was a difficult question to answer, and St. Vallier was not in a mood to allow the blame to be placed on the shoulders of Bismarck. As he understood that statesman's policy he was not animated by hatred or spite, but was acting throughout consistently in what he considered the highest interests of Germany.<sup>2</sup> Until the French Government understood that, they understood nothing, but unfortunately, it was precisely this that the French Governments of 1881 were least capable of comprehending. It was the good fortune of France that at this moment Bismarck was sincerely anxious about his relations with her. Throughout the summer he supported her in her Tunisian adventure, and as the months went by there was much speculation as to just how far Bismarck would really go. Lord Granville informed Lord Ampthill that he had "proofs" of German advances, and the latter, on his side, was quite willing to accept the evidence given, and even added a few further "proofs" on his own account.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 6 October 1881.<sup>3</sup>—

"... The proof, if further proof were needed, is also to be found in the expedition to Tunis, to which the advances of Germany have undoubtedly led France, whilst Prince Bismarck's subsequent advances to Russia have isolated France before he has even succeeded in isolating England. . . .

Prince Bismarck's further plan of 'binding France to Germany as Austria is already bound, and thus to make an alliance of three' has doubtless occupied his mind since the Congress of

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. p.62.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* p.69.

<sup>3</sup>*F.O.* 64. 983. No. 414.

Berlin, but he does not appear impatient to conclude that alliance, since he has meanwhile made advances to the Pope, and abandoned the 'Culturkampf' at the very moment that France is about to take it up.

Whilst the Germans in Paris are 'expressing joy at the difficulties which have arisen in the course of the commercial negotiations between France and England' they are in Berlin expressing a similar feeling . . . at the 'military incapacity' displayed by the French generals in Africa, which allows them to look forward with less apprehension to the war of revenge they still persist in believing M. Gambetta is gradually preparing France to undertake.

No doubt, if France were sincerely willing to join the tripartite alliance Prince Bismarck has now renewed with Russia and Austria—he would receive her overtures in a corresponding spirit for the sake of securing a lasting peace for Germany, but so long as M. Gambetta alludes in public speeches to the recovery of the lost provinces, as he did at Cherbourg and Belleville, Prince Bismarck's advances to France will no doubt continue, but they will tend to encourage her spirit of enterprise out of Germany's way in regions where Germany's interests cannot be impaired, and at the cost of other Powers. . . ."

Shortly after this Gambetta's ambition to sit in the chair of office was realized, and St. Vallier, now absolutely out of sympathy with the Government, resigned. Lord Amthill was unfeignedly sorry, and his regret was shared by all, including Bismarck, who had come to associate him with the maintenance of friendly relations with France, and who saw in his resignation an additional proof that his fears of a Gambetta régime had been fully justified. These apprehensions had led him, Lord Amthill thought, to isolate France completely before this régime came about. If Gambetta continued the friendly policy of his predecessors Bismarck would meet him in a friendly spirit, but any indication of a change of policy would be met with accordingly.<sup>1</sup> The new French Ambassador, M. de Courcel, met with a very cordial reception when he took up his duties in Berlin—not however to represent the policy of the bugbear, Gambetta, after all—but that of Freycinet, a much more cautious politician. During the next few months the thorny

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 984. No. 445. To Lord Granville, Confidential. 25 November 1881.



question of Egypt filled the stage, and that question has been dealt with elsewhere.

In November of that year of short-lived French administrations Tissot was found complaining that Bismarck was planning another attack on France in the following spring. Lord Ampthill was not only sceptical, but also rather impatient at the old cry, which appeared to him entirely unwarranted by the circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

All Bismarck's anxieties so far as Gambetta was concerned came suddenly to an end with the unexpected death of the French politician at the end of the year 1882. Lord Ampthill reported that the tone of the Berlin Press, "official and officious" was "kind, tactful and appreciative, and calculated to give no offence to France." In contrast to this attitude of the Press, public feeling was relieved at the death of one whose name had become identified with the "war of revenge." This contrast was shown in the reactions of the Emperor and Bismarck. On receiving the army deputation on New Year's Day the Emperor said, "Gentlemen, I have good news to give you on the commencement of the New Year. Gambetta is dead, and with him the threatened war of revenge. You can unsaddle your horses, and look forward to long peace." But this speech displeased Bismarck. Officers were ordered not to repeat it, and the Press instructed to ignore it, friendly articles being sent to them instead. Bismarck realized, now that Gambetta was dead, that he stood for the stability of the republic, and who could tell whether his death might not mean a struggle for power of pretenders of every hue?<sup>2</sup>

In England the papers adopted a sensational line. The *Pall Mall Gazette* published an article: *War Rumours*. "A rumour has reached us, which we publish with all reserve, that the German residents in London have received a communication similar to the one made to them by their Government before the Franco-German War, that they may possibly be shortly summoned home for military service."

The *Nord Deutsche* took up the challenge: "To say that this report is an invention is unnecessary; but we cannot restrain our amazement that a paper, which according to general belief,

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1008. No. 406. 3 November 1882.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1024. No. 6.

belongs to Lord Rosebery, an under-secretary of state, and son-in-law of Rothschild, should lend itself to the publication, even under all reserve, of a rumour which is either intended to cause a fall on the Stock Exchange, or to embitter the British public against Germany as a disturber of the peace."

Franco-German relations became tenser towards the end of the year 1883, but Bismarck avoided any appearance of exploiting them. In October occurred the significant incident of the insult to the King of Spain in Paris after his visit to Germany, where he had been made colonel of a regiment stationed at Strassburg. Before remonstrating the Spanish Government invited Bismarck to associate the German Government with the protest, but the Chancellor, while agreeing that an insult to Germany was intended, and thanking the Spanish Government for the invitation, intimated that this particular incident was only characteristic, and that he did not intend to give the French Press an opening for fresh recriminations.<sup>1</sup> But Germany was far from ignoring the insult. A return visit of the Crown Prince to the King of Spain was ostentatiously announced, and he travelled by a circuitous route to avoid France. In Spain itself there was some apprehension about the visit—lest Bismarck should exploit the occasion to draw her into the orbit of German politics. Sir Robert Morier's account of the festivities, and of the effect produced upon public opinion was sent to Lord Ampthill, who saw in it his own impressions of the good effect the visit would produce, confirmed.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Ampthill was indeed more and more impressed with Bismarck's obvious anxiety not to be drawn into a war, and when the Spanish Ambassador, clearly expecting a sympathetic hearing, complained about French activities in Morocco, he was received with great reticence by Count Hatzfeldt. Lord Ampthill, in the course of private conversation a few days later, inquired about the significance of the matter of the French Ambassador, who smilingly replied: "Many idle tales had been put in circulation by the Spaniards, whose wish to establish an excuse for interference in Morocco had been much encouraged by the 'friendly advances' made to Spain by Prince Bismarck."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1027. No. 291.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1049. No. 3. To Lord Granville. 3 January 1884.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 76. Secret. 25 March 1884.

Before Courcel went on leave in April 1884 he was honoured with an interview with Bismarck, and was on such good terms with him that even when a few months later the German flag was insulted by the Paris mob during the national festival celebrations, his explanations and regrets were graciously received and accepted.<sup>1</sup> Such were Franco-German relations at the time of Lord Ampthill's death. Their cordiality can perhaps best be understood in relation with the growing colonial animosity between Germany and Great Britain.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1051. No. 204.

LORD AMPTHILL AND BISMARCK'S  
COLONIAL POLICY—THE LAST MONTHS  
[1880-4]

*The attribution of false motives is one of the main difficulties against which diplomacy has to contend.*

—NICOLSON.

*Bismarck's Anti-Colonial Policy.*—Colonial forces at work in the Empire—Bismarck and emigration—Lord Ampthill's view of Bismarck's policy—growing demand for German expansion—foundation of Colonial Societies.

*The Change in Bismarck's Policy.*—The Fiji question—new society formed—Dr. Nachtigal's expedition—Angra Pequena—misunderstanding between England and Germany—Bismarck's anger—his demand satisfied—declaration of policy—the penal settlement question—tension in the Press—Lord Ampthill's last despatch.

*The Last Months.*—Lord Ampthill's health in the spring of 1884—foundation of the English Church in Berlin—Lord Ampthill's late application for leave—illness at Potsdam—collapse and death—universal mourning in England and Germany—funeral at Chenies.

I

FOR ten years Bismarck had consistently and vehemently denounced a colonial policy for Germany, and had convinced Lord Odo Russell that his aversion was based upon fundamental principles. Over and over again he said that without a fleet, which he had no intention of building, colonies would be but a liability, but those who climb mountains must be prepared for changes of vista—they cannot create the landscape, but only make their way through it. So it was with Bismarck, the master climber of the political Alps. While his eyes had been rightly fixed on the familiar landscape of European

diplomacy, the rising generation of virile Germany was feeling its way in the world beyond.

The great work of Livingstone, Stanley and Speke, and the colonial schemes of Leopold of Belgium, all served to feed the flame recently kindled in German imagination. The discoveries of their own explorers, Nachtigal, Peters and Weissmann, inspired their enthusiasm, while the colonial acquisitions of other nations aroused the concern of their public men.<sup>1</sup> German scientists were busy, German traders were building up new businesses, and geographical and scientific societies were springing up in the fertile soil and flourishing exceedingly. All this energy could not be bottled up in Europe for ever, even by a Bismarck, and though the financial crash of the seventies precipitated matters, the inevitable consequences of the development of the German nation would have had to be faced.

Before Bismarck realized the force behind the urge for expansion he had sternly discouraged emigration. The Empire wanted soldiers, and ere the economic crisis taught Bismarck to think in other terms, he only conceived the question of world power in its political dimensions. With French revenge always haunting his dreams he had no intention of dissipating the forces of the nation by building a navy, but nevertheless he was not the man to watch German subjects swell the population of alien empires, and emigration agents like the unfortunate Mr. Dyke, fared badly in Germany.<sup>2</sup> But the crisis gave a violent shock to his philosophy. It was totally unexpected, and it had to be met with unexpected measures. Internal legislation, such as the adoption of protection and the introduction of social legislation—suppressing with one hand the social-democrats and improving the lot of the worker with the other, did not touch the fringe of the problem, so far as the needs of this new, strong and eminently valuable body of citizens was concerned. They were the very Drakes and Frobishers of the empire, and if any country chose to play the role of Spain, it was undoubtedly Bismarck's

<sup>1</sup>In 1879 a book by D. F. Fabri: *Bedarf Deutschland der Kolonien?* created a great impression on German commercial thought.

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Dyke got into trouble for trying to persuade German citizens to emigrate to Canada.

There are several despatches in connection with his case in February and March 1873.

business to decide what the official policy of the Fatherland should be.

All this may be clear to-day—it is always easy to be wise after the event—but in those days it was only seen through a glass darkly. On 22 February 1880 Hohenlohe wrote in his diary after a dinner conversation with the Chancellor, “He will not hear of colonies, now as at other times. He says we have not an adequate fleet to protect them, and our bureaucracy is not skilful enough to direct the management of them.”<sup>1</sup> And when a bill was introduced a month later into the Reichstag to give Government support to the German Maritime Trading Company, it was thrown out, although its backers urged its necessity on the grounds that it would prevent the Samoan Islands from falling into the hands of British capitalists.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore not surprising to find that Lord Odo Russell took no very serious view of an article written by a certain Ernst von Weber, advocating a German colony in South Africa, although the same article had caused Sir Bartle Frere many searchings of heart.

*To Lord Granville.* 18 September 1880.<sup>3</sup>—

“... Herr von Weber’s plan will not meet with any support either at the hands of the German Government or on the part of the German Parliament—while German emigrants feel more attracted by a republican form of government than by that of a Crown colony.

The German Government feel more the want of soldiers than of colonies, and consequently discourage emigration.

The German Government has marked its disinclination to acquire distant dependencies however advantageous to German enterprise, by the rejection of the Samoa bill.

Under present circumstances, therefore, the plan for a German colony in South Africa has no prospect of success.”

Though the gap between German trading interests and Bismarck’s political preoccupations was wide, the logic of events tended to make it ever narrower. The next year the Press interested itself in rumours of the purchase of a site in Morocco, proving the overseas urge to be active but not that Bismarck was

<sup>1</sup>Hohenlohe: *Memoirs* II. 259.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 959. No. 177. To Lord Granville. 24 April 1880.

<sup>3</sup>F.O. 64. 962. No. 432.

yet a convert. "My own impression is," wrote Lord Odo, "that however much Germany may long for coaling stations and colonies, Prince Bismarck will resist the pressure in that direction as long as he remains in office," and discussing the question with the French Ambassador, who trusted "his authority and great experience," he actually declared himself

"in a position to say that Bismarck was very much annoyed at the noise of the press, and that orders had been given to put an end to it . . . he had recently assured Lord Ampthill that he knew that for a long time Germany would only be a third-rate naval Power . . . in these circumstances in case of war she would be exposed to the danger of seeing her colonies occupied from the beginning, being unable to render them effective support without diminishing too greatly the resources destined for the defence of her own territories. The Emperor was equally hostile to any idea of expansion to the detriment of Holland, whether on the continent or beyond the sea, and repelled in general the idea of colonization. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

In this scepticism Lord Ampthill long remained steadfast. So categorical had been Bismarck's assurances that he could not bring himself to associate the Chancellor's name with the policy of acquiring Samana despite the fact that Lord Lyons reported on Baron de Almeda's authority that definite overtures had been made by Germany.

*To Lord Granville.* Most Confidential. 27 February 1882.<sup>2</sup>—

" . . . Prince Bismarck is personally so averse to the acquisition by Germany of coaling or trading stations, or indeed of any kind of outlandish possessions . . . the overtures mentioned by Baron de Almeda to Lord Lyons could scarcely have been made by Prince Bismarck.

Of his colleagues, none would initiate overtures of this description without his sanction.

The overtures, therefore, more probably come from some commercial company, and as the minister of the Dominican republic Mr. J. W. Kück, who generally resides at Hamburg, has, contrary to his habits, been living in a hotel at Berlin for

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. 141-2.

<sup>2</sup>*F.O.* 64. 1005. No. 60.

some weeks past, it is not unlikely that he may be the mouth-piece of his commercial friends at Hamburg.

I doubt, however, whether Prince Bismarck would himself entertain any proposal for the acquisition of Samana, and the less so if he thought it might lead to any question with the United States Government, but I will endeavour to ascertain how the matter stands. . . ."

The French Ambassador did not share his British colleague's reluctance to believe in German expansion, but thought it inevitable. The House of Godefroy of Hamburg, one of the foremost in pushing the colonial idea, had met with financial disaster and the Reichstag had refused a demand of Prince Bismarck to come to its aid. Enthusiasm was cooled for the moment, perhaps, but Courcel did not believe that the policy would be abandoned.<sup>1</sup> Later events proved him right, but for the time being these straws did not seem to indicate very clearly the final direction of the wind, and it was only gradually that the change in Bismarck's attitude became apparent.

Lord Ampthill's belief that Bismarck would never pursue a colonial policy was not due to failure to observe the growing demand for expansion. In reporting an account of an enthusiastic meeting of the German Colonization Society, founded at Frankfort under the leadership of Prince Hermann zu Hohenlohe-Langenburg, he outlined some of the objects the Society hoped to further by vigorous propaganda. The meeting was attended by many prominent men, but not by any member of the Government.

While public opinion was thus being educated at home, German traders were busy overseas. The first flames of controversy flew up in Fiji. New Zealand had annexed this island in 1874, to the annoyance of the German trading firms already settled on the Island, and they began to make complaints of their treatment to the home government. Thus was Bismarck's political indifference to colonies brought sharply up against his imperial responsibility towards some of the most energetic sons of the Empire. Before this challenge his former objections began slowly to melt away, and he was led, step by step, along the path that was to lead to a colonial Empire after all. His anger

<sup>1</sup>*D.D.F.* IV. 301.



was aroused by the discrepancy between the soothing assurances of the British Foreign Office and the actual state of affairs on the spot, as reported to him by the German plaintiffs. A commission of inquiry was mooted but never met, and in the spring of 1883 Bismarck took the matter up officially with the British Government. It was not a case of acquiring a colony, but of securing the rights of German nationals already settled there. Lord Ampthill impressed upon the Government the necessity of dealing with any just claims that Bismarck might make in an open and generous manner. No one knew better than he the importance of giving the German Chancellor no cause for complaint in any matter touching the welfare of the German people.<sup>1</sup>

While Lord Ampthill understood the growth of public opinion in Germany on the colonial question, in Britain Lord Granville was too doctrinaire and his vacillation and delay were the worst possible means of approach to a very delicate situation. Bismarck became impatient and bewildered Lord Granville by demanding nothing less than a mixed commission. Lord Ampthill knew only too well the price of opposition. "If you cannot give him the mixed commission," he said, "we must make up our minds to a phase of ill-humour on the part of the great Chancellor, whose sensitiveness has become proverbial."<sup>2</sup>

The Fiji question and others that have yet to be considered made a profound impression upon public opinion in Germany. In commercial and industrial circles the necessity for colonial expansion was filling the minds of men still agitated by the worries and anxieties of a long trade depression. Expansion became to the industrialist what socialism was to the working man. In both cases it meant the solution of a social problem in the interests of the class to which he belonged. In this atmosphere more enthusiastic meetings were held and resolutions passed, and a new colonial society was formed under the impetus of Dr. Karl Peters. Lord Ampthill, in taking note of its inauguration, still refused to identify the movement with the official German policy.

<sup>1</sup>Fitzmaurice: *Granville* II. 338.

<sup>2</sup>Fitzmaurice: *Granville* II. 339.

*To Lord Granville.* 8 April 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

“ . . . Africa was indicated as the most suitable and available field for German colonization, and the aims to be embodied in the statutes were unanimously decided on as follows:—

1. To collect funds for the object of the society.
2. To discover and acquire suitable districts for colonization.
3. To direct the stream of German emigration to these districts.

It was stated that the number of German emigrants to the U.S.A. in 1883 was 194,490. Of this number 25,190 belonged to the commercial and industrial classes.

There is no reason to suppose that the German Government will be more disposed to lend its countenance to the efforts of the society than it has been in the case of similar movements in the past. . . .”

Lord Granville had scarcely had time to digest this news, when Lord Ampthill sent him information that the hero of the German societies, Dr. Nachtigal, was off to W. Africa on a mysterious mission, and an article in the *N.D.A.Z.* a few days later made it clear that the F.O. was taking a very active interest in his journey indeed.

*To Lord Granville.* April 1884.<sup>2</sup>—

“ . . . The Nord Deutsche states that the happy increase in the commercial relations of Germany with the W. coast of Africa and the evident need felt that the interests of German commerce should not be left to the protection of trading-consuls have induced the F.O. to send out Dr. Nachtigal to these parts, a person particularly suited for such a duty, to further German interests there and to report upon a scheme for consular appointments on that coast. . . .

It is intended, at the suggestion of the F.O. to station permanently some war vessels on the west coast of Africa, and for the present the German gun-boat *Möwe* has been placed at the service of the commission. The *Möwe* left Kiel on the 15th inst. and is expected at Lisbon towards the end of the month, where it will take on board Dr. Nachtigal and his staff. . . .”

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1102. No. 92.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1000. No. 102.

This despatch threw the Foreign Office into alarm. Agitated comments were endorsed upon it, for of its significance there could be no doubt, and this alarm was by no means allayed by Lord Ampthill's next despatch, which contained a report of a resolution of the Colonial Society to Bismarck.

*To Lord Granville.* 2 May 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... The Society requests the F.O. at Berlin to take all suitable measures to support the internationalization of the navigable course of the Congo district, and specially to endeavour to avert the injury likely to accrue to German trade and industry from the treaty concluded between Portugal and England. . . ."

Dr. Nachtigal, thus backed with official support, proceeded to Togoland and annexed it, and to the excitement of German public opinion and the bewilderment of the British Foreign Office was added indignant alarm in British Africa, where the very possibility of German penetration was regarded as prejudicial to prescriptive rights, and growing suspicion in British commercial and industrial circles. All thought they were right from their own point of view, but these events and tendencies, the uncertainty of Bismarck's aims and the brusqueness of the German agents created the worst possible atmosphere for the consideration of the most serious problem of all, which was now reaching an acute stage—that of Angra Pequena.

In November 1882 a German merchant named Lüderitz, one of the most enterprising and determined of the German colonizers, had asked for German protection for his factory on the W. African coast. Hitherto such merchants had been covered by a vague and shadowy British protection, and Bismarck had made inquiries as to how far that protection extended. In the *Standard* on 27 December 1883 there appeared a highly-coloured account of his activities and of the difference of opinion his transactions with the native chief had aroused. Three days later Bismarck officially inquired of Lord Granville exactly what claims the British Empire laid to the land in question. When the question was asked Bismarck already knew that the land had not hitherto been regarded as British property, but he declared later that it was put in order to avoid infringing in the least degree upon the rights of a friendly Power.

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1102. No. 111.

A long delay took place while the British Government negotiated at its leisure with the South African Government, whose attitude was that the British should not relinquish claims along the west coast. Strangely enough, it does seem to have struck Lord Granville that this long delay might be open to misinterpretation, and there was much indignation when Lüderitz, encouraged by his Government, proceeded with his affairs under an assurance that he would be protected in any land not actually claimed by another Power. Whereupon, he hoisted the German flag at Angra Pequena. A British firm with interests in the neighbourhood made spirited protests, and British South Africa generally looked on in anxiety and concern, which was aggravated to fever heat by the arrival of a gun-boat and corvette. On 27 May 1884 great excitement was caused in England and South Africa by the receipt of a telegram from Bismarck himself to the German consul at Capetown protecting Lüderitz's commercial establishment at Angra Pequena. To Granville's agitated inquiry as to its significance Lord Ampthill made a cautious reply.

*To Lord Granville.* 30 May 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... The German Government are still awaiting an answer from Your Lordship to Count Münster's letter of 31 December last, and the premature reports in the Press about the taking possession of Angra Pequena are due to the great and growing impatience of the German people for the inauguration of a colonial policy by Prince Bismarck, who has hitherto shown no inclination to satisfy their craving for colonies beyond sending Dr. Nachtigal on board the *Möwe* to report generally on the W. coast of Africa. . . ."

In the meantime, prompted by the Cape Government, the British laid claim broadly to land even beyond the territory in question. There followed weeks of explanation and counter-explanation. Lord Granville's point was that any delay was due to colonial necessities to which Bismarck did not give sufficient weight, but he found it impossible to impress the German Chancellor in the slightest degree with the idea that any claim could be laid to the land at all. The clamour of public opinion in Germany, Bismarck said, was so great that unless Britain

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1102. Africa. No. 4.

could be a little more forthcoming he could no longer support her policy in Egypt as he had done in the past.<sup>1</sup> This threat was sufficient to induce Granville to recommend a modification of policy to the Cabinet. Its necessity was obvious, though it caused the utmost indignation in South Africa. In a conversation with Herbert Bismarck on 21 June 1884 Lord Granville said that the Cabinet were not prepared to oppose Germany in the matter, but asked for an understanding with regard to British subjects who owned concessions. Herbert Bismarck was non-committal, and refused to be explicit about the extent of German claims in the region "until they were perfectly informed of all the local circumstances."<sup>2</sup> Granville also asked that no penal settlement should be made and Herbert Bismarck replied that the German Government had no intention of founding such a settlement.

Four days later Bismarck made a long-expected statement in the Reichstag in which he laid down the principles upon which he would support German colonial expansion.

*To Lord Granville.* 25 June 1884.<sup>3</sup>—

"... He had already expressed his conviction, which he still maintained, that it would not be polite for us to occupy districts in which as yet we had no interest, in order to afford a factitious stimulus to German emigration thither. . . . But the question of extending the protection of the Empire to free settlements of German subjects, which are, in a certain sense, off-shoots of the German nation, in districts which are not yet under the recognized sovereignty of any other state, is quite a different one. He considers it to be the duty of the Empire to extend its protection to settlements beyond the sea, made in this way by subjects of the Empire, and this, not only to their factories, but also to the territories which they may have acquired. . . .

... Once foreign nations had recognized the firm will of the German nation to protect each German according to the motto 'Civis Romanus sum' it would not be difficult to afford this protection without any special display of force. But if indeed foreign nations were to see that we were not united, we should then be powerless to do anything and would do better to renounce all idea of any development beyond the sea. . . ."

<sup>1</sup>See p.323.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1102. No. 180. Confidential.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.* No. 174.

He expounded the same theme in a private conversation with Lord Ampthill a few days later, who welcomed the opportunity of hearing from the Chancellor's own lips an explanation of the motives that had led him from indifference and opposition to interest and support. He differentiated again between a deliberate emigration policy and that of supporting enterprising merchants, and he reminded Lord Ampthill with admiration and a desire to imitate it of the British policy of granting charters to trading companies like that of the East India Company.

*To Lord Granville.* 27 June 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... He said that he had approached the whole subject with great reserve; he admired the energy of the men who wished to found these colonies, and he had said to himself, how would he be justified if he replied to them that Germany was too weak to found colonies, her fleet not strong enough, and that difficulties might arise with foreign governments? It was impossible for him, the first chancellor of the newly-created empire to say to these men, even if he believed it, 'Germany is too weak and too poor for such undertakings.' ... Germany did not wish to carry on an exclusive and selfish colonial policy like other states smaller than England had done. ..."

Despite his friendly assurances to Lord Ampthill, Bismarck's whole being throbbled with resentment at the attitude of the British Government over this affair and that of Fiji, and not even its satisfactory settlement, nor the appointment at long last of the mixed commission he had so long demanded, softened his anger. It was to blaze forth again the following month over a question Lord Granville had thought was settled—that of creating a penal settlement in Angra Pequena. On 24 July, in an exceedingly bitter minute, he accused the British Government of making quite unjustifiable conditions with regard to German rights. Germany might not create a penal settlement, but he could not admit the right of H.M.G. to make any conditions with regard to land over which they had no claim. Lord Granville, surprised and worried at Bismarck's tone, disclaimed all intention of making conditions and suggested that a common agreement should be made on the matter.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1102. No. 180.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1103. No. 225b. Granville to Ld. A. 7 August 1884.

It was now August 1884. Lord Ampthill had been carrying on these unhappy and distressing negotiations while bearing the secret burden of a disease that was all too soon to prove fatal, and the last despatch he was to write upon these difficulties was one of gentle warning against the heat of Press propaganda which was having so evil an effect upon public opinion in Germany.

*To Lord Granville.* 18 August 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... The feeling in Germany respecting these colonial questions is so strong, as Y.L. is aware, that the publication of the above-named correspondence can only tend to confirm the general suspicion that England opposes the colonial aspiration of the people of Germany, and the impression of disappointment it must produce will be painful and lasting throughout Germany. . . ."

"Ifs" in history lead nowhere, but one is tempted to wonder what difference it might have made to Anglo-German colonial tension if Lord Ampthill had been perfectly well and alert during these months, and above all if he had lived to prevent the unhappy recriminations of the following period.

## II

In the spring of 1884 Lord Ampthill was present at the wedding of the Queen's granddaughter at Darmstadt. He came back suffering from a severe internal chill and was never fully well afterwards. Nothing could disturb his natural sweetness of disposition, but it was observed that he was rather quiet and out of spirits.<sup>2</sup> Nobody dreamed of the tragedy that was to follow.

Although his pleasure was clouded by ill-health, he could not but rejoice at an event that took place in the May of this year. For many years it had been his desire and the cherished

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1103. No. 225.

<sup>2</sup>"Though always more or less suffering from an ailment which is supposed to be fatal to the temper, he was always, in his intercourse with the world at least, the perfection of sweet, equable and unruffled spirits. But a shade of melancholy and sadness seemed to have settled on him of late, as if he already presaged an early end." *Times*. 26 August 1884. See also G.P. IV. pp.82-83.

wish of the Crown Princess to see an English church in Berlin. The English colony worshipped either in a "hired room of a noisy hotel," or a "cramped apartment of a disused palace" kindly but inadequately put at their disposal by the sympathetic Emperor, and it even happened that when Lord Salisbury came to Berlin for the Congress, he travelled four hours to Dresden, "in search of a church wherein to forget the cares of diplomacy in the consolations of religion."<sup>1</sup> Marriages were solemnized in a specially prepared chamber at the Embassy—the preparations affording great delight to the Ambassador's interested children. The need of a church was urgent, but funds only trickled in in a very thin stream until the happy idea was conceived of commemorating the silver wedding of the Crown Princess by building the much-needed church. Fully £8,000 was raised as a result of efforts made both in England and Germany, England's share being no less than £5,700. A further magnificent donation from the banker, Bleichröder, added to the Emperor's generous gift of a most desirable site within the garden of the Schloss Monbijou brought the end well within sight. The church could now be built and endowed, and the longed-for time had come to lay the foundation stone.

The Crown Princess herself, as was fitting, was to lay the stone, and the religious part of the ceremony was performed by Bishop Titcomb, Coadjutor Bishop for the supervision of English Chaplaincies in Northern and Central Europe, and by the British Chaplain, the Rev. R. B. Erce. The ceremony was attended by the members of the imperial family, several of the chief court officials, including Dr. Kögel, Court Chaplain and head of the Consistory of the Evangelical Church, the members of the British Embassy and of the English congregation. The day had been specially chosen for the Queen's birthday, 24 May, and the Crown Princess set such store by the date that it was not postponed even though the Court was in mourning for her brother, the Duke of Albany.

The *Times*' account is not without a certain decorous humour. We read of the brilliant sun shining on "a circle of English faces moulded into devotional seriousness by the notes of a harmonium," as the congregation joined in singing *The Church's One Foundation*. Before the Princess arose at the great moment

<sup>1</sup>*Times*. 26 May 1884.



to lay the stone, Lord Ampthill read the document that was to be deposited beneath it.<sup>1</sup> It was then placed in a glass vessel containing also the *Times* of Thursday, 22 May, the *Kreuz Zeitung* of 24 May, a golden English sovereign and a German 20 M. piece. The stone laid, the *Times* tells us of "a gracious speech, expressing his pleasure at helping to inaugurate a permanent English church in Berlin, and his sincere wishes for its successful completion," delivered by the Crown Prince, and of the impression it made, for, "but for the fact that the prompt striking up of another hymn: *O Lord of Hosts, Whose Glory Fills*, reminded the assembly that their meeting was one of the nature of religious solemnity, this speech . . . would most certainly have been followed by a salvo of ringing cheers, embodying as it did, the sentiments towards the country and the countrymen of his consort which have always animated His Royal Highness." So was laid the foundation stone of the Church of St. George.

It would probably have been advisable for Lord Ampthill to have taken his leave earlier this year, but in the middle of August we find him still in Berlin, applying to Lord Granville for leave of absence, "partly for health reasons and partly because of private affairs." On Tuesday, 19 August, having spent a busy day in the heat of the Embassy, he went to his Potsdam villa, where he had spent so many quiet and studious evenings, enjoying its magnificent view of Potsdam and the lakes and forests around. This evening he felt too unwell to do anything, but he struggled to transact business on the following day, and even when he had to ask Mr. Scott to act for him on Thursday, said that he hoped to be able to come on Saturday to sign despatches. When Saturday came it was clear that he was a very sick man indeed. He suffered great pain and was very weak, but tried to give Mr. Scott instructions through Lady Ampthill.

Hopes were raised on Sunday that he was getting a little

<sup>1</sup>"The first stone of the memorial church of St. George was duly and solemnly laid on May 24, 1884, by her Imperial and Royal Highness the German Crown Princess, Princess Royal of Great Britain and Ireland. This Church of St. George is dedicated for ever for the benefit of the members of the Anglican communion in Berlin, to the performance of divine service and the administration of the sacraments and rites of the Church according to the use of the Church of England, having been built by contribution from those in Great Britain and Ireland, as well as from those in Germany, who desire by the erection of this Church to express their loyal and sincere congratulations to her Imperial and Royal Highness on the occasion of her silver wedding in 1883."

better, when the bursting of an internal abscess during the evening perforated the intestines, and both his own physician and the Empress's medical adviser, who was in attendance by her special desire, realized that he was beyond the aid of human skill. And then Lord Ampthill, "after six hours of almost complete absence of pain and except during a slight interval, in full possession of his consciousness, passed peacefully away at 11 o'clock in the presence of Lady Ampthill and all his family."<sup>1</sup> At the age of fifty-five, the gentlest, wisest, most able of diplomatists was suddenly and tragically removed from a world that needed his talents more than ever.

The Empress, calling at the Embassy a few minutes after he had died, was assisted into the house from the carriage and was the first to offer her sympathy to the sorrowing Lady Ampthill. Her own grief, indeed, was deep and sincere. "I can think of nothing else but our recent incalculable loss," she said to Mr. Scott with great emotion when they met at the christening of Prince William of Prussia's baby son, "a national loss to both countries. Knowing and appreciating England as thoroughly as I have always done, I am convinced that she never had an abler, truer or worthier representative than Lord Ampthill. He had this advantage to a remarkable degree that whilst faithfully serving the interests of his own country he could enter into the feelings and interests of this country and thus render signal services to both. I wish you to repeat what I am saying in every quarter in your own country. Lord Ampthill will never be forgotten by us or by Germany."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Lord Ampthill was uppermost in the minds of all at this christening ceremony. The Emperor mourned a personal friend. "It is now fourteen years," he said, "since I had the advantage of making Lord Ampthill's acquaintance at Versailles, and I at once learned to appreciate his signal ability and his noble, loyal character. It was, I believe, in some measure owing to my personal wish that he was sent to me as the Queen's Ambassador, and every day he remained here I learned to appreciate his great qualities more and more. I deplore his untimely loss more than I can express to you." The sense of

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1051. No. 231. Mr. Scott to Lord Granville. 25 August 1884. It is more than probable that his illness was appendicitis, and that a similar attack would not prove fatal to-day.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1051. No. 249. To Lord Granville. 1 September 1884.

loss was even greater to the Crown Prince and Princess, who felt it like a death in the family, and who knew that it would be like having to begin a new life over again without Lord and Lady Ampthill to share all their most intimate joys and sorrows.

Grief in Berlin was truly universal. "I believe," wrote Mr. Scott, himself feeling the loss keenly, "that never has there been such universal and genuine mourning for a foreign statesman than is felt in all circles here at the untimely death of Her Majesty's Ambassador at this court."<sup>1</sup>

The sad news reached the Crown Princess in England, where she was on a visit to her mother. They were both plunged into the deepest distress, and the Queen found some relief to her emotions by confiding her sorrow to the journal she kept so faithfully throughout her life: "Another of the bright useful lives gone, another who was a great help to me and mine. Verily God's hand is heavy upon us and 'His ways are not our ways.' . . . And poor dear Emily, she loses everything, they were so devoted to one another, and he used to do everything in the world for her."<sup>2</sup> The next day she wrote a touching letter, full of the warmest sympathy, to the grief-stricken wife who had lost most by the tragedy at Potsdam. ". . . We must not think of ourselves, but of *you*, poor, dear Emily, who have been so rarely blessed in such a husband, who was as good as he was gifted!

"The nation, and I, and *Europe*, not to speak of Germany, have lost one who cannot be replaced. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

One idea runs like a thread through all these expressions of sorrow, an idea which was put into words very tersely by Herbert Bismarck, the last man to sentimentalize over anybody, "the death of Lord Ampthill is a very great loss. . . . He was most popular in political as well as in social circles in this country, and if he had not been ailing and low-spirited for some time past he might have kept our relations free from every sort of uneasiness."<sup>4</sup> How fatal that loss was to prove, not even the sentimental Queen could realize.

It was Lady Ampthill's wish that the body of her dear husband should be brought home to lie among his kindred. No honour

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>*Q.V.* II. p.530. 25 August 1884.

<sup>3</sup>*Q.V.* II. p.530.

<sup>4</sup>*G.P.* IV. pp.82-83.

was too great for the Emperor to afford the body of the beloved and deeply-mourned Ambassador, and it was therefore "in a royal hearse followed by two of the royal carriages in full state" that Lord Ampthill left Potsdam for the last time. With his own hands the Crown Prince had laid two wreaths on the bier and then the sad, solemn procession started on its slow journey homewards. Prince Radziwill and Count Königsmarck were in waiting at the station to represent the Emperor and Empress, and as the train steamed into Charlottenburg station the Ambassadors of Italy, Austria and France, the staff of the British Embassy and the whole of the Diplomatic Body in Berlin, were present with Dr. Busch, acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Count Radolinski, Comptroller of the Crown Prince's household, to show their respect and deep regret at the passing of the doyen of the diplomatic corps.

On 2 September he was laid to rest at Chenies.

## LORD AMPTHILL AS DIPLOMATIST

*Reporting accurately, finding the true causes, noting certain symptoms, sifting information, calculating chances, all these are rare gifts, or rather I should say rare acquirements, which require study and observation and experience to obtain.*

—NICOLSON.

Lord Odo Russell's Character—his work as Ambassador—attitude to German internal affairs—his conduct of international negotiations—Anglo-German relations—Lord Odo as chief—his relations with his colleagues—social relations—sense of humour—relations with Crown Princess and English Royal Family—Lord Ampthill and the German Emperor.

## I

AS a young man, Odo Russell, with other colleagues of social position, had worked in the Foreign Office under Lord Palmerston. In one of his more autocratic moods, the Foreign Secretary had hit upon the happy idea of summoning his juvenile assistants by bell instead of by the more dignified but expensive messenger. A chorus of resentment arose throughout the office, until the indignant clerks were persuaded by the popular Russell to look at the matter in a more humorous light. "You may call me by horn or drum if you like," he confided to his friends—"I only want to know how quickly when I can be of service."<sup>1</sup> It was the same Russell, who, a few years later, continuing his apprenticeship under a more terrifying leader, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, faced another difficult and delicate situation—and faced it in a different way. The Ambassador was in a rage, and all Constantinople, with one exception, was trembling. "Damn your eyes!" cried Stratford to his young

<sup>1</sup>*Times*, 26 August 1884.

colleague. "Damn *your* eyes, Sir!" was the reply, uttered in the one tone that alone could make such a retort effective but not impertinent. His chief, who knew a man when he saw one, took no offence, but hereafter worked on the best of terms with his intrepid attaché.<sup>1</sup>

Many years passed, and the distinguished British Ambassador, Lord Ampthill, was weary and ill. For months he had been ailing, and the doctors hardly seemed to understand what was the matter with him. In this state of health an unwonted oversight had occurred, and Lord Granville drew his attention to the fact that he had not reported an exchange of duties between two messengers. Captain Newton had asked permission to return home on private affairs, and Captain Lumley being willing, had gone to St Petersburg instead. "I regret exceedingly," wrote Lord Ampthill, "that I forgot to report the circumstances to Your Lordship as I was bound to do—and will be careful in future to inform Your Lordship without loss of time whenever it appears to me necessary or desirable to sanction an exchange of duties between Queen's messengers, instead of requiring them to perform the particular service on which they have been despatched by the Foreign Office."<sup>2</sup> Three weeks later Lord Ampthill was dead.

These incidents, taken from very different periods of his career, help to explain why he was so excellent an ambassador. He had the fine intuition of what was due to his own personal dignity, wedded to the most delicate sense of what was to be yielded to another. But he was endowed with other diplomatic qualities far more important. To the unusual gift of penetrating deeply into the minds of others was added a wide charity that forbade him to distort their motives. Witty and tactful, yet sympathetic and sincere, blessed with charm and a perfect linguist, he impressed by his personality and inspired confidence by his character. This confidence he never disappointed, and it was this that made him one of the best servants his country ever had at another court, for the Embassy at Berlin afforded him full scope, both for the gifts of his personality and the qualities of his character.

<sup>1</sup>The late Lord Ampthill assured me that this story (which I have seen as relating to another attaché) had his father as its hero.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1051. No. 213. To Lord Granville. 3 August 1884.

There was no previous experience to act as guide in dealing with such a new power as Germany was proving herself to be. Her policy, directed by a genius whose aims, methods and political *Weltanschauung* were foreign to the ideas of parliamentary democracy in which Lord Odo Russell had been brought up, was often hard to understand, and even more difficult to interpret. Bismarck magnified the least suspicion of aggressiveness or opposition to unsuspected proportions, and few ambassadors were able to bear the strain for long, for very few had that sympathy which could penetrate beneath the method to the core of statesmanship which lay underneath. It was Lord Odo Russell's great service that he was able to do this. A French writer observed that he was the only one at the Court of Berlin who could read the Chancellor's thoughts, and that he alone, "judging that Man of Iron according to his merits," was able to "maintain good relations with him in spite of the constant collisions of their several policies." He even thought that Bismarck feared Lord Odo, but was certain he appreciated him, knowing that "in spite of his outward amiability," he could "neither be led away with flattery, nor hoodwinked with friendly protestations, that he [would] repel every attempt at corruption; and that, with immovable calmness, he [would] distinguish the promise verbally made to him from that which is intended to be kept. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Where German internal policy was concerned, Lord Odo was discretion itself. From the beginning he was convinced that the *Kulturkampf* would fail, but he knew how to be silent when necessary and when his opinion would be of value. The consequence was he did not see his influence diminish to vanishing point with a Chancellor who suspected him of sympathy with ultramontanism. In dealing with internal questions which he could not but regard as affecting his own country like those of protection and army reorganization, he was very careful to keep his Government accurately, but fairly informed, giving full and sympathetic weight to the motives which prompted the Chancellor in his policy.

In international affairs delicate and important negotiations passed through his hands. In 1875 he did his utmost to prevent Bismarck's policy from being misunderstood, and when the

<sup>1</sup>*Times*. 27 August 1884.

crisis came he was far from following the bad example of Gorchakov in making personal capital out of an impossible situation, and it is from his despatches that it is now possible to read between the lines and see how much justification there was on both sides of the dispute. If he disposes of some of Bismarck's accusations against the unfortunate Gontaut-Biron, he also shows that there was no deep-laid plot against France on the German side.

From the moment the Eastern Question was re-opened his part was a peculiarly delicate one. His personal sympathies were not always in harmony with the views of his Government, and from his angle of vision it seemed that there was often sheer lack of policy, and he had the unpleasant conviction that this was nowhere more obvious than in the capital to which he was accredited. He wanted Great Britain to adhere to the Berlin Memorandum, and would gladly have negotiated a closer understanding with Germany. He neither understood nor admired Lord Derby's policy in 1877, not because he wanted war with Russia, but because from Berlin he saw that Britain was losing prestige, influence and respect, and that inertia was far more likely to lead to disaster than to peace. He was not the man to conceive it his duty to follow an independent line of his own, like Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, nor to associate himself with a policy deliberately antagonistic to another Power, like Sir Henry Elliot, but he was very much disappointed at times when his suggestions for a clearer policy were ignored or refused outright, for the Government's vacillations, as he knew only too well, confirmed Bismarck in his suspicions that England, in the long run, was not a Power to be reckoned with. It is no mean proof of Lord Odo's power that Lord Salisbury was able to approach Bismarck so easily on entering office. The consequences of weakness or tactlessness in Berlin might have been great indeed, in the strained atmosphere of the spring of 1878.

At the Congress it was his tact that prevented disaster. As the French writer before quoted observed, "During the Congress of Berlin, he, to all appearance, withdrew into the background. But he quietly contrived to render vast services to England—whom Lord Beaconsfield's zeal must have compromised if there had been no one to tone down its impetuosity, and to



convey, in diplomatic French, Disraeli's exceedingly plain language."<sup>1</sup>

After the Treaty a new epoch opened. If the tedious negotiations tried his patience to breaking point, there is no hint of it in his correspondence, yet there must have been times when he was irritated beyond words—so many months' work, so little progress made, but he himself, according to the testimony of Hohenlohe, was accommodating and pleasant.

The opening of the Egyptian Question and the development of Bismarck's colonial policy brought Britain into new relations with Germany. Lord Ampthill, thoroughly understanding the underlying principle of Bismarck's policy, knew that he would support Great Britain in Egypt only as long as he considered this in the best interests of the people for whose welfare he was responsible, a condition that was not equally clear to Granville, and which led to misunderstanding when the colonial problem cropped up in another part of Africa. Here Bismarck came into conflict, not only with the British Foreign Office in London, but with the intangible democracy of the British Empire in South Africa. From the beginning Lord Ampthill kept Granville informed of the growth of German colonial aspirations, but was long, too long, perhaps, in identifying Bismarck with them. This did not prevent him from pleading for a cordial and broad-minded approach to Germany when definite crises arose. The colonial situation was too complicated for his tact and understanding, his wise appreciation of the just attitude to be adopted towards the aspirations of Germany to find effective support in London, or to penetrate at all to Capetown, and so Bismarck's anger bore bitter fruit in the discordant relations that developed between the two countries, for Lord Ampthill, whose deep and wise patriotism for his own land, which was nowhere better expressed than in his desire to see her follow clear policies taking the existing state of the world into consideration, was not the pivot, but only the representative of British policy.

As Ambassador to Germany Lord Ampthill believed in her essential greatness and sympathized with her fundamental problems, so different from those of the British Empire. His long contact with Bismarck made him a fervent admirer of his

<sup>1</sup>*Times*. 27 August 1884.

genius, but never blinded him to the evils of the methods he pursued, nor did his admiration prevent him from showing friendship and sympathy to the many victims of his wrath. His own outstanding success in these circumstances can only be as great a tribute to the German Chancellor as to him.

## II

As a chief Lord Ampthill has become a legend among the secretaries at the Embassy. He had profound respect for the sound principles underlying the "red tape" of office routine, realizing that it is better for all when the wheels, oiled by precision and accuracy, run smoothly and without friction. "Lord Odo Russell had taught him that inaccuracy is one of the most unpleasant symptoms of indolence,"<sup>1</sup> writes Harold Nicolson in his father's biography, and he leaves us with the impression that he never regretted learning the lesson. This was surely because his secretaries were also taught by their chief's large-heartedness that it was no empty form he was demanding, but that behind it there was deep zeal for the welfare of his staff.

Regarding the Embassy as a training school for future ambassadors, he encouraged his secretaries to get as much social experience as possible, while for his part he spared no pains to improve the conditions under which they worked. His despatches are plentifully besprinkled with requests, charmingly expressed, for favours or better conditions for those who worked under him. When he supported applications for leave he took a kindly pleasure in adding a personal message on his own account, and his appreciation always carried strong weight with the Foreign Office. On one such occasion Mr. Dering had applied for leave without mentioning that he had already been in England that year for family affairs. The Ambassador took the matter up.

*To Lord Sanderson. Private. 23 September 1880.*<sup>2</sup>—

My dear Sanderson,

Dering has been hard at work here since the autumn of '79

<sup>1</sup>Nicolson: *Lord Carnock* p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 962. (with No. 426).

with the exception of four or five days when his father was supposed to be dying, and he was telegraphed for, but it was happily a false alarm—and then again for six days to attend his brother's wedding, but I cannot, for my part, consider these two absences as leave.

Dering has become such a hard-working and efficient head of the Chancery that I beg to recommend his application for 18 weeks' leave, which he most richly deserves, to Lord Granville's favourable consideration. Indeed if Lord Granville should at any time require an able and trustworthy Secretary of Legation or Embassy anywhere, he will find in Dering the right man.

Yours ever sincerely,  
Odo Russell.

"As Odo wanted it" leave was granted, but his interest was not only extended to the members of his secretarial staff, and he who received the confidence of emperors and princes was not too busy to concern himself with the financial difficulties of messengers and porters. When the head porter of the Embassy died, leaving an unpensioned widow, it was owing to his efforts alone that the Government made her a grant of £50; it seems little enough, but for those times it was a great deal.

Punctilious though he was, when a lapse occurred, he was the most generous of chiefs in reporting the circumstances. One Saturday, the 7 December 1872, they waited in vain for the messenger, Captain Ball, to call at the Embassy for the bags. In the end Lord Odo forwarded them by Mr. Dering, hoping that Lord Granville would reimburse the extra expenditure—but what had become of Captain Ball? His story was dramatic, but hardly convincing. While on his way from his hotel to the Embassy he discovered that he had lost his purse, which so upset him that he forgot his immediate duty and proceeded at once to the railway station, where having fortunately enough money still about his person, he bought his ticket and took his place, and it was not until the train started that he realized that he had forgotten the bags.

Lord Granville, displaying a pardonable scepticism, asked Lord Odo Russell for a report. He found out that Captain Ball had left the Chancery at 3.30 to go to dinner at the hotel Angleterre, saying he would come back for the bags at 8 o'clock,

but he did not return. A messenger sent to the hotel brought back the news that he had left at the usual time in a carriage hired from the hotel. The next day a telegram came from him at Brussels, expressing regrets and asking for the bags. Further inquiries were made at the hotel, where it was asserted that he had dined and drunk but little wine, leaving the hotel quite sober, and instructing the driver to call at the Embassy on the way to the station.

Lord Odo sent for the driver and questioned him carefully. He said he often drove the Queen's messenger from the hotel to the Embassy and then to the railway station and he perfectly remembered taking up the messenger and bringing him at his own request to the door of the Embassy. He waited for some time, but Captain Ball did not get out so he got off the box to ask if he should ring the bell. He was told to drive on to the station. He did so, helping with the luggage, received his fare and returned to his stables. He was sure the messenger was perfectly sober.

No light was thrown upon the mysterious affair at the station, and Lord Odo Russell, despite all assertions to the contrary, was driven to conclude that Captain Ball must have been intoxicated.

"... Although I have known him for twenty years," he wrote, "as a punctual, reliable and trustworthy messenger, I greatly fear that on this occasion his loss of memory must have been caused by the use of some stimulants which the cold and stormy state of the night of the 7 instant may have tempted him to have resorted to on starting from his hotel, and the effects of which may have been aggravated by the loss of his purse.

Whether this impression, which is certainly not proved by the evidence collected at Berlin, be correct or not, the messenger's omission to call for the bags deserves a severe reprimand, and the deduction from his salary of Mr. Dering's expenses to London."<sup>1</sup>

And that is where it must be left.

If Lord Odo Russell was an ideal chief, he was no less popular with his colleagues. His generosity of mind left him no room

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 244. 258. No. 349. 18 December 1872.

for petty or unkind thoughts, and his gentle disposition took no delight in biting or unjust witticisms. When his colleagues, as so often happened, fell under the lash of Bismarck's irritation, for his temperament as a psychological factor in international relations was not always appreciated by them as well as by him, his reports home were marked by moderation, sympathy and understanding. His relations with his European colleagues have already been indicated in the course of this narrative, but there was also the unfortunate case of Mr. Sargent of the United States. He indiscreetly communicated to the German Government a resolution of condolence passed by the House of Representatives on the death of Dr. Lasker, the leader of the left wing of the German National Liberal party, with a request that it might be communicated to the Reichstag. Bismarck fiercely refused, and a diplomatic storm blew up in the *Reichsanzeiger*. Much bitter and unpleasant comment was made upon Mr. Sargent and the company he kept. From the bad taste and unfortunate temper of the newspaper it is a relief to read Lord Amphill's secret explanation to his Government.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 21 February 1884.<sup>1</sup>—

"... Personally, I am far from sharing the common impression that my American colleague, Mr. Sargent, is animated by a sense of hostility towards Prince Bismarck and his Government. I believe myself that the present state of things has been simply brought about by the fact that Mr. Sargent, who is, as I have said before, an able American lawyer to deal with, never having lived in Europe before, and being totally unacquainted with foreign languages, has sought the most congenial society to himself he could find in Berlin among English-speaking and advanced German Liberals, irrespective of diplomatic usages, with which he never yet had an opportunity of becoming acquainted."

An impossible situation was ended when Mr. Sargent was recalled from Berlin. He was offered St. Peterburg, but decided to retire from a diplomatic career in European capitals.

Far more discreet than Mr. Sargent, even the clever Blowitz could not get the "smallest item of information" from Lord Odo at the time of the Congress,<sup>2</sup> yet his great tact made it possible

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1049. No. 39.

<sup>2</sup>Blowitz: *Memoirs*, pp. 136-7.

for him to entertain company at the Embassy with a freedom that his colleague must have envied. He invited Arnim to lunch when he was in disgrace, and Lord Goschen noticed that while "caste" forbade social intercourse with radicals, Lord Odo Russell was a privileged person and loved on occasion to see others than the smart set in the official and diplomatic world at his hospitable table.<sup>1</sup>

## III

Lord Goschen's observations were correct. Lord Odo Russell's interests were so catholic that it was, indeed, impossible for him to confine his hospitality to any one set. His interest in art made a deep impression upon the painter, Anton von Werner, who was struck by the depth of the knowledge he had acquired during his long residence in Rome, and by his vivacious way of expressing it.<sup>2</sup> It was his love of literature and science as much as his human interest in her personal happiness that made his society so attractive to the gifted Crown Princess. With his family, other British ambassadors and various friends he corresponded freely, and it is only to be regretted that so few of his letters have been preserved. With Sir Henry Layard he had many cultural interests in common, and the correspondence of the two ambassadors reflects the cordial relations between them.

British Embassy, Berlin. 5 July 1872.<sup>3</sup>—

My dear Layard,

I lost no time in writing to Mr. Krüger the Hanseatic Minister about Schülze's copy of the Memling at Lübeck, but only got his answer to-day, which I enclose.

It is most satisfactory, but as the difficulty has settled itself my interference was useless, which I regret, as I should like to have thought that I had been instrumental in doing something for so old and dear a friend as you have been to me.

I can well understand your feelings about Madrid—you must be sick of eternal and everlasting "unsettlement" and must wish

<sup>1</sup>Elliot: *Goschen*, I. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Werner: *Erlebnisse u. Eindrücke*, 230.

<sup>3</sup>Add. MSS. 39001. British Museum. Private Holograph.

for a change to rest yourself. My fond wishes for the public service and you are to see you at Rome or Stamboul, and I would burn a painted and gilt taper to St. Katherine of Sienna, the patroness of diplomacy to send you there if I could for a second persuade myself the good lady would do it.

We have had a delightful time at Berlin and have met with the most cordial of receptions everywhere.

Emily sends her very best love to Mrs. Layard and hopes you may soon be passing through Berlin on your way to a new post.

Ever yours sincerely,

ODO RUSSELL.

Five years later Layard was appointed to Stamboul, as his friend had hoped, and it was characteristic of Lord Odo Russell that in congratulating his colleague he took the opportunity of making a favourable comment on another ambassador.

*Russell to Layard.*<sup>1</sup>—

"When last we met at the Atheneum I told you that '*you were the man*' and now I congratulate you, myself and the country on your appointment.

My object in writing to you is to recommend to you in the warmest manner your coming German colleague Henry VII, Prince Reuss, and his wife, the Princess of Saxe Weimar. They are both highly cultivated, devoted to art and artists, themselves amiable, agreeable, cheerful and possessed of all the qualities desirable in colleagues.

My wife sends her love and I send my respects to Mrs. Layard. To my mind it is more charming than words can describe that you should now be the great Eltshi!"

Scholar and linguist, Lord Odo was no lover of outdoor sports. He encouraged his children to take an interest in nature rather than games, and he himself was to be found oftener in his own magnificent library than on the sports ground. He himself used to amuse them and others by his love of an unusual pet—the snake. He not only collected living specimens, but even

<sup>1</sup>Add. MSS. 39012. (April-May 1877). British Museum. Private Holograph.

found in Berlin a fellow collector attracted by the charms of these bejewelled reptiles. Perhaps he preferred such pursuits to the more energetic pleasures of sport and the chase because he often suffered greatly from a complaint of the liver. Some biographers, faced by moral or spiritual flaws in their hero, explain them on the ground of physical handicaps secretly and sometimes nobly borne. Judged by these standards Lord Odo Russell's character is indeed a remarkable one. His illness, which is notoriously trying to the disposition, was apparently powerless to affect his innate sweetness of spirit, and the ambassador who had most excuse for being irritable and bad-tempered, if we regard these unpleasant qualities as pathological, has become a legend for courtesy and good temper. It was once said of him, "Doors were never closed in Odo Russell's face, and if they had been shut behind his back he would always have got them opened again by his gentle knocking."<sup>1</sup> But there was nothing weak or naïve about this good temper, and his subtle vein of humour, which made him such brilliant company and the author of many a clever *bon mot*, was not absent even from despatches when it was appropriate. When the Shah of Persia left Berlin for London in June 1873, it was his delicate task to prepare H.M.G. for the unconventional habits of their distinguished guest.

*To Lord Granville.* Secret. 7 June 1873.<sup>2</sup>—

"The impression made by the Persians at Berlin is not exactly a favourable one.

Steps have already been taken by the Grand Vizier and Miza Malcolm Khan to improve the habits and manners of the suite—but nobody ventures to tell the Shah that he should be punctual and not keep the royal family waiting—that he should not sit down before the Empress can obtain a seat, or take Her Majesty by the elbow to make her get up—or put his arm round the back of Her Majesty's chair at dinner—or raise his voice so as to startle the company, or put his fingers into the dishes, or take the food out of his mouth again after it has been chewed—and fling it under the table if it does not suit his taste. . . .

. . . I would gladly have refrained from placing these details

<sup>1</sup>*Times.* 26 August 1884.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 244. 266. No. 306.



on record if I had not felt it was essential H.M.G. should know them."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Odo Russell was seen at his best in his relations with the Crown Princess. The British Embassy was to her a second home, where she and her husband would drop in as welcome and honoured guests, without formality and without constraint.<sup>2</sup> If the atmosphere of the German court tried the Princess, with Lord Odo and his family she could always be herself, and enjoy the brilliant conversation she loved in an air of understanding and sympathy. "He was her dearest friend," wrote the Queen on 25 August 1884, "who was ever so kind and true to her, whose home was the only one she could go to for help and comfort."<sup>3</sup>

It speaks volumes for the Ambassador's tact and diplomatic skill that the friendship he was able to offer the Princess for thirteen long and difficult years never for one moment clouded his relations with the ever suspicious Chancellor. He who saw an Ultramontane intrigue in the most innocent visits of Gontaut-Biron to the Empress, and who hated Catholics during the Kulturkampf, with the most burning hatred, found no cause for alarm in a friendship between the British Ambassador and the Crown Princess, even though he knew that Lord Odo Russell's mother was a Catholic, and that he, himself, was *persona grata* with his enemy, the Pope. Great statesman though

<sup>1</sup>Bismarck found the Shah "intelligent but uncouth," and Lord Carnock, who had much to do with him later on called him a man of honour. Nicolson: *Lord Carnock*, p.64.

Bertrand Russell relates that when the French Ambassador whispered to Lord Odo at a feast given in the Shah's honour: "Ne diront-on pas qu'il est ivre?" he replied, "Mais ne savez-vous pas que 'la nuit tous les Chats sont gris'!" *Camberley Papers*, II. 547-8.

The Shah was certainly shrewd. After a visit to an English fire-station he wrote: "They have invented a beautiful means of saving men. But the wonder is in this, that on the one hand they take such trouble and originate such appliances for the salvation of men from death, when, on the other hand, in the armouries, arsenals and workshops of Woolwich and of Krupp in Germany, they contrive fresh engines such as cannons, projectiles and similar things for the quicker and more multitudinous slaughter of the human race. . . ." Redhouse: *Diary of the Shah of Persia*. p.190.

<sup>2</sup>The late Lord Ampthill told me that he retained delightful memories of the Crown Princess's frequent visits to the Embassy when he was a child, and that he remembered her as full of fun. He said that he thought the *Letters* did not create the impression that she was as cheerful as she really was. When I asked him if he was in awe of Bismarck as a small boy, he replied: "We were in awe of nobody at the Embassy. The atmosphere in our home was so different."

<sup>3</sup>Q.V. III. 530.

he was, Bismarck's spirit was impatient and domineering, and he could not brook either opposition or contradiction. To him the views of the Crown Princess were dangerous and mischievous, and as he carried personal feeling to the very highest degree in all his controversies, their mutual relations were often tense to the point of breaking. Lord Odo Russell, happily, was cast in another mould. Never did he, by word or deed, increase the strain, but always tried to ease it. The slightest trace of intrigue would at any moment have sufficed to cause untold harm, but that trace was never there, and so, for years he was able to proceed with his good, if unobtrusive, work. In his estimate of the Ambassador, Bismarck never seems to have departed from the opinion expressed in 1870 when he said: "At first one thing aroused a little suspicion against him in my mind. I have always heard and found that Englishmen who know French well are not worth much, and he speaks quite excellent French. But he can also express himself very well in German."<sup>1</sup> On two occasions when it was rumoured that the Ambassador was to be transferred, Bismarck expressed his absolute confidence in him and his belief that his work was invaluable for the good relations between Germany and England. An Ambassador who could render himself indispensable to two such antagonists was surely endowed with extraordinary qualities. Is it a platitude to say that the world's machinery would run with less friction if such characters were not so rare?

What did he himself think of all this friction? His own position was delicate, for no matter how he might hide his feelings behind a wall of gentle courtesy and chivalrous sympathy to her and of forthcoming politeness to him, he was only too conscious of the antipathy the high lady inspired in Bismarck, who, indeed, took no pains to hide the fact that he saw no possibility of ever agreeing with her.

"... This state of affairs is very distressing," wrote Lady Russell to the Queen, "and my husband is more unhappy about it than he can say, because he foresees difficulties in the future that will be quite beyond the influence of diplomacy . . . my husband fears that Prince Bismarck will seek to make the position of the Crown Princess with the public a very difficult one, in

<sup>1</sup>Busch: *Bismarck. Some Secret Pages in his History*. I. p.337. See also Radowitz: *Aufzeichnungen und Erinnerungen*. II. p.26.

order to have his own way about the administration of Germany, which he wants to unify altogether as Cavour unified Italy—by mediatizing the reigning princes.”<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the little joke Russell had made years before about “only wanting to be of service as quickly as possible” explains much. His desire extended equally to Bismarck, but above all he had before him the service he wished to render in maintaining good relations between the two countries he loved so well. Always perfectly master of himself, he could admire Bismarck’s superlative powers as a statesman without ever being hypnotized by his personality, and could enter into the Crown Princess’s sufferings without becoming sentimental over them—and probably he was the only diplomatist then living of whom that could be said. The Queen thoroughly understood the situation and valued the help that Lord Odo was able to render her daughter,<sup>2</sup> while the Prince of Wales, often poles asunder from his mother in estimating character, shared with her her high estimation of the Ambassador’s wisdom. He himself experienced it when in Berlin for the marriage of his nephew. The Crown Princess was in an unhappy frame of mind—nervous, baffled and rebellious, but filled with gratitude to her friend and adviser. Lord Odo knew how critical the Prince was with regard to Germany, and used his opportunity to dispel misunderstandings and relieve the tension.<sup>3</sup>

When the old Emperor, stricken with grief at the death of his brother, wanted a confidant on whose sympathy he could rely, it was to Lord Ampthill that he turned. Immediately after the funeral he sent for him, and began to say how much he appreciated the message from the Queen in his sorrow, but then, breaking down, leant crying on his friend’s arm until he recovered himself sufficiently to continue. He dwelt on the mutual memories they had of Prince Charles and sobbed again as he recounted the story of his last illness and death. Then, clasping his friend’s hand he said the next funeral he would attend in that church would be his—that he hoped he would remember the twelve years of cordial intercourse between them since the days of Versailles, and above all, that he would

<sup>1</sup>Ponsonby: *Letters of the Empress Frederick*. p.132.

<sup>2</sup>Q.V. II. 368.

<sup>3</sup>Lee: *Edward VII*. I. pp.475-6.

cherish his earnest desire that those relations of confidence so happily established since then between England and Germany and so essential to the future peace of Europe would be continued by his son and successor.<sup>1</sup> Deeply moved by the grief he had been allowed to witness, Lord Ampthill withdrew. The Ambassador did not live to mourn the Emperor. William had yet five more years of life, but scarcely two remained to him.

When he died, it was Bismarck who expressed a truth that History must endorse: "England might give a successor to the Ambassador that she had lost, but could not expect to replace him."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>F.O. 64. 1024. No. 35. To Lord Granville. 24 January 1883.

<sup>2</sup>F.O. 64. 1051. No. 247. Mr. Scott to Lord Granville. 30 August 1884.

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